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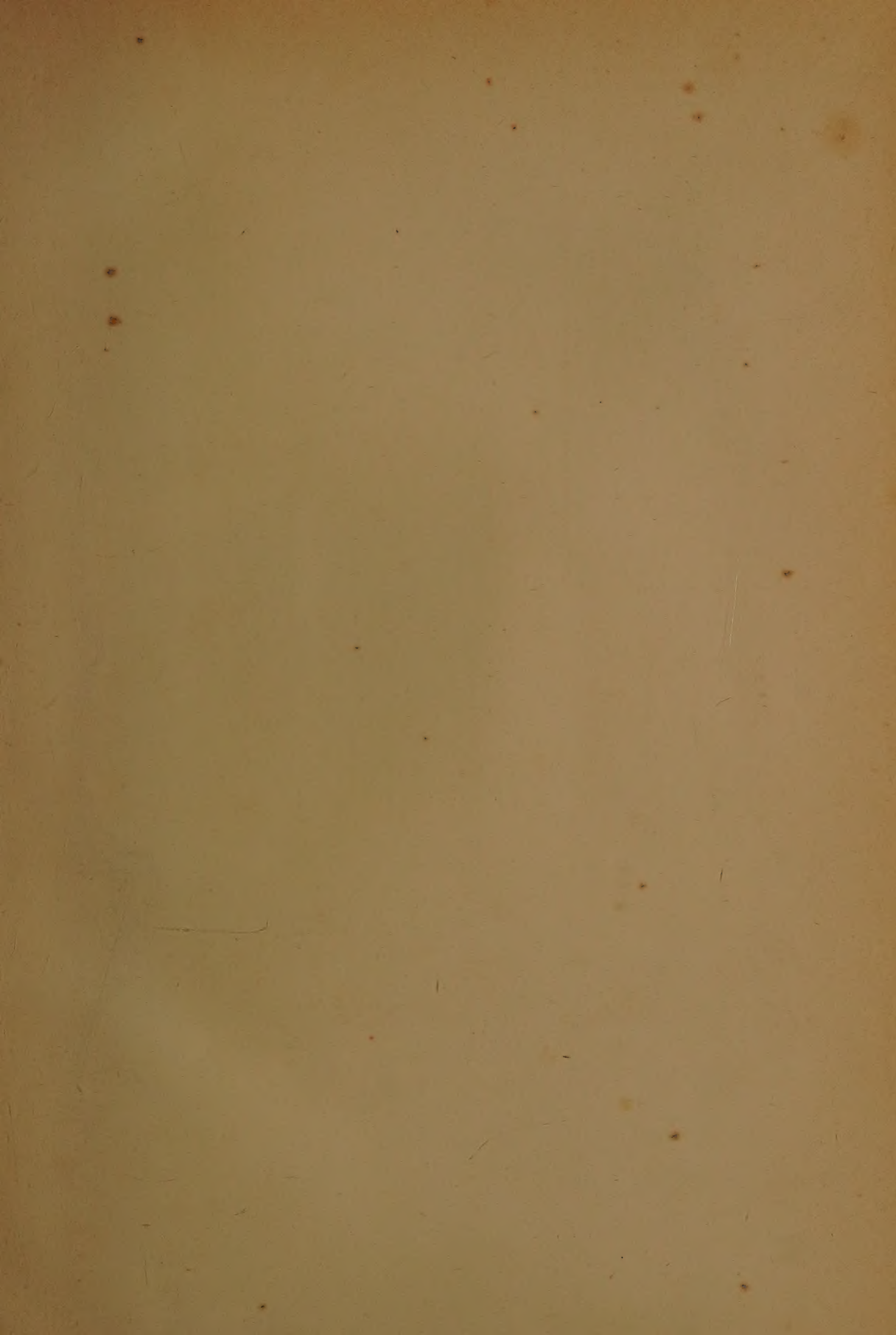
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THE BOOKMAN
ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE





Geoffrey Chaucer

The Bookman Illustrated History of English Literature

BY
THOMAS SECCOMBE
AND
W. ROBERTSON NICOLL

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOLUME I.—CHAUCER TO DRYDEN

WITH FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
IN REMBRANDT PHOTOGRAVURE

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
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INTRODUCTION

"This volume would have been at least twice as large, if I had not made bold to strike out innumerable passages."—Publisher's Preface to "The Travels of Mr. Lemuel Gulliver."

HISTORIES of English Literature with an apparatus of portraits and biographies would appear to supply a need which distinguishes a comparatively late phase in English letters. The eighteenth century had advanced some years before such a sentiment as curiosity in regard to the private lives of great authors can be said to have existed. The gradual awakening of some such interest brought in its train a series of classified biographies of poets, dramatists, and novelists. Eventually we arrived at the compilation of elaborate *Fasti* as represented by the manual of the late Prof. Henry Morley, and from this stage there was rapid progress to what the specialist calls "mere history." We are all historians now, and literature lends itself with exceptional ease to historical treatment. History, however, is an extremely ambiguous term. It is used indifferently to signify chronological annals, animated pictures, portraits of great men, the confused warrings of dynasties and races, and the still more perplexing conflict of theories, political, ethical, economic, and social. Nor is the difficulty inherent in the word in any degree diminished by its application to literature. Analogy, however, suggests one extremely convenient demarcation of the subject. It prompts us to isolate the subject of origins as bearing the same relation to literature as anthropology bears to history; thus enabling us to start fair with a established nationality and a full-grown vernacular. The histories of our vernacular European literatures are all comparatively brief—five or six centuries at most—and that of England is no exception. "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." That at any rate is the European point of view. Starting with a language and vocabulary in some respects rudimentary, and one or two simpler forms, the historical development proceeds with little break from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous.

The term "literature" itself is by no means easy to define. In the widest sense, every thought that is converted into script becomes literature from the moment of the conversion. Attempts have been made from time immemorial to circumscribe the plot of literature which is called fine or humane and corresponds to Fine Art (*Belles Lettres*, *Beaux Arts*) in such well-sounding but vague generalities as "the lasting expression in words of the meaning of

life." The "best words in the best order" is another ingenious phrase which has been restricted generally to the definition of good poetry, but is equally applicable to good prose. There is *one* inevitable order. But all such definitions evade the question of significance; everything depends on the magnitude of the thought expressed and its relation to the more permanent elements of human wit and wisdom. We cannot satisfactorily define literature any more than we can agree upon a point of view from which critics are to approach and comment upon it. Are they to treat the history of literature as a process and its work as a product to be classified and standardised, or are they simply to gaze at its masterpieces and describe their sensations? These are a few of the problems. Other problems are suggested by the word "English." What do we mean by English?

A school we might almost call the nationalist school of English historians, headed by Freeman and Green, made the singular discovery that English history really began in Holstein. A like ambition has tried to discover the well-head of English literature in Jutland. That the preponderant element in our speech is not Latin or Norman-French but Low German is perfectly true, but the nomenclature which prefers Old English to the unsatisfactory but much more distinctive Anglo-Saxon as applied to this fossil English is worse than misleading. If we are to go into the misty period before the single speech emerges that men of to-day call English—groping among patois from which Chaucer would have recoiled and which Wyclif and Langland would hardly have understood—there seems no adequate reason why we should not include the Latin, Norman-French, and primitive Celtic literature of early Britain. All these languages were spoken and written by our forefathers in this country; Latin in church and cloister, by diplomatists and historians; French at court and camp, by lawyers and merchants; Welsh and Cornish west of Malvern and Mendip. Here, in fact, are two great subjects—the watershed or dividing line between which is formed by the century which unites the commencement of *The Canterbury Tales* in 1391 with the completion of Caxton's life-work just one hundred years later. The first subject, which is not ours, is the early literature of Britain—a literature not of one language nor of one race, and mainly of philological, historical, and antiquarian interest. The second great subject, and the greater, is English literature. From Caxton's death in 1491 England is no longer polyglot. The several streamlets have united to form one river, the current of which we must endeavour to follow in its ever-deepening course wherever English is cherished as the mother-tongue.

William Caxton began his work as a popular printer in this country, roughly speaking, in 1475, and he found books written in English to suit his purpose, going back just about a hundred years. He felt that it was necessary, from every point of view, to confine himself to the King's English as it

was understood in the days of Edward IV. And with the aid of his press he commenced that work of fixing the English that is written and printed whereby was consummated in three or four generations a process which otherwise might have continued for several centuries. We follow Caxton in regarding Chaucer as the day-star of English poetry, as Wyclif may perhaps be regarded in a sense as the day-star of English prose; and our First Book is devoted to a discovery of the King's English as Caxton and our early English printers understood it. Quitting the era of transition, our Second Book deals with the great flowering time of English drama. We have a new England equipped with a new vision and intoxicated with a new language which overflows in an almost inexhaustible fulness of lyric poetry. It is the age of Spenser, of Marlowe, of Shakespeare, of Fletcher, of Jonson and Donne. In our Third Book we have to navigate the straits of Puritanism. It is something that religion was persuaded to countenance an epic poem—the one great epic in our language. In sharp contrast to the age of Milton and Bunyan is the region where Dryden and Pope, Addison and Swift, rose supreme over the taste of nearly a century and a half. It is an age of critical commentary and pungent epigram, of prose essay and verse satire. It is an age when the class of readers was immensely enlarged. Men began to collect in coffee-houses and divert themselves with social essays and moral satires. This era of red brick ushers in an age of Whig optimism, national expansion, and masculine common-sense. Our Fifth Book is sober with the multitude of moral tales and essays, enlivened with much descriptive letter-writing, informed by copious memoirs, historical and biographical. It is a well-to-do age that includes Johnson and Chesterfield, Richardson and Fielding, Gray and Walpole, Burke and Gibbon, Goldsmith and Sheridan, Cowper and Burns. Then comes the era of Romance dealt with in our Sixth Book. It is the great transforming epoch of Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt. The wonder-worship that was to do combat with the critical forces of the age is mirrored in the typical apostrophe of Keats to the Voice of Romance,

The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Our Seventh and last Book is devoted to the literature of the era 1837—1900, which will probably be known as the Victorian. Although in inspiration, in intensity, and in sunny humour the Victorian age may have been surpassed, in fundamental brain power and in intellectual variety it is probably without a rival in our literary annals. It is the age of Carlyle, Newman, Mill, Emerson, Froude, Ruskin, and Spencer; of Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, and Swinburne; of Macaulay; of Dickens, Thackeray, George

Eliot, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy. To this age we give the title "The Ascendency of the Novel."

The present attempt at an historical survey of our literature from the invention of printing down to the present day makes no pretence of being exhaustive. It has been reported from an honest study of the materials, but we cannot hope to have escaped errors. We have written, not for specialists or scholars, but for the general public. We have hoped to interest and amuse, and in some measure to instruct ordinary readers. We provide no large-scale map, but a handy atlas to direct the student to an independent exploration of certain definite regions. Some attempt has been made at classification, scientific, æsthetic, and moral, and we have tried to refer individual works to their respective types. More importance, however, is attached to the biographical element, which sets forth the environment and personality of authors.

In attempting to supply an index to the best things that have been said and the best things that have been written about English literature we have not disdained the plan of Baedeker in using a star (*). This, it is hoped, will be useful in helping those who are bewildered by the number of items in systematic bibliographies. But while trying to convey the verdicts of different ages and successive schools of critics, we have not by any means refrained from personal estimates. In short, a sincere attempt has been made to convey within moderate limits and with as much fulness and accuracy as was possible an introduction to English literature easy to read and understand, and at the same time not wholly devoid of value as a book of reference. The illustrations have been selected from the best available portraits.

The main part of this history has been done by Mr. Thomas Seccombe. The authors are both much indebted to Mr. J. H. Lobban, who has carefully revised the whole work. There are many other minor obligations, which it will be our pleasant duty to acknowledge in their proper places in the bibliographical notes appended to the various chapters.

T. S.

W. R. N.

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INTRODUCTION

"This volume would have been at least twice as large, if I had not made bold to strike out innumerable passages."—Publisher's Preface to "The Travels of Mr. Lemuel Gulliver."

HISTORIES of English Literature with an apparatus of portraits and biographies would appear to supply a need which distinguishes a comparatively late phase in English letters. The eighteenth century had advanced some years before such a sentiment as curiosity in regard to the private lives of great authors can be said to have existed. The gradual awakening of some such interest brought in its train a series of classified biographies of poets, dramatists, and novelists. Eventually we arrived at the compilation of elaborate *Fasti* as represented by the manual of the late Prof. Henry Morley, and from this stage there was rapid progress to what the specialist calls "mere history." We are all historians now, and literature lends itself with exceptional ease to historical treatment. History, however, is an extremely ambiguous term. It is used indifferently to signify chronological annals, animated pictures, portraits of great men, the confused warrings of dynasties and races, and the still more perplexing conflict of theories, political, ethical, economic, and social. Nor is the difficulty inherent in the word in any degree diminished by its application to literature. Analogy, however, suggests one extremely convenient demarcation of the subject. It prompts us to isolate the subject of origins as bearing the same relation to literature as anthropology bears to history; thus enabling us to start fair with a established nationality and a full-grown vernacular. The histories of our vernacular European literatures are all comparatively brief—five or six centuries at most—and that of England is no exception. "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." That at any rate is the European point of view. Starting with a language and vocabulary in some respects rudimentary, and one or two simpler forms, the historical development proceeds with little break from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous.

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T. S.

W. R. N.



Caxton's Press in the Almonry, Westminster

BOOK I
THE KING'S ENGLISH

CHAPTER I

CAXTON

“Good reason has England to be proud of this son of hers who opens a new era in her literature.”

JUSSERAND.

From xylography to typography—Gutenberg—Pre-Caxton English—William Caxton—His life and achievement—*The Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophers*—Caxton's influence on the language—Early printing and manuscripts.

THE invention of typography was not the result of a happy thought or of a flash of invention; it was rather the result of a long series of modifications and mechanical improvements, more especially in connection with the manufacture of tools, which took place between 1400 and 1440. This last may be taken as the critical date, which witnessed the transformation from *Xylography* to *Typography*; while the perfection of the art, as far as all its principles are concerned, is associated indissolubly with the printing of the Bible of forty-two lines, known as the *Mazarine Bible*, or First Bible of John Gutenberg, inaugurated at Mainz in the autumn of 1450. We do not know precisely when this impression of the Vulgate was completed, though we shall probably not be wrong in making it coincide with that of the greatest historical event of the age—the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. We know for certain that the Indulgence of Nicholas V. was printed at Mainz in November, 1454; and this is the first known specimen of typography which bears the date printed upon it.

The progress of investigation has, in the main, led to the assertion being made with less

and less hesitation, that Gutenberg first of all cast printing-types in moulds and matrices—the one critical step in advance which converted printing into a great art. And his type-mould was not merely the first; it has remained, essentially, the only practical mechanism for making types. Assuming, as we have been content to do, that Gutenberg was the prime inventor of printing,¹ it is plain that there were many contemporary rivals in the art, who were already, as it were, on tiptoe at the threshold of the invention. Conspicuous among such rivals were Fust and Schoeffer, the printers of the admirable *Mainz* or *Mentz Psalter* of 1457. It is tolerably plain that Schoeffer had learnt the mystery of printing at the fountain-head—in the workshop of Gutenberg. Two rival printing-offices having once been established in Mainz, it was not likely that the process could long be kept secret. It was communicated to Strasburg by Mentelin and Eggstein in 1458, by Pfister to Bamberg in 1461, by Ulric Zell to Cologne in 1462, by Keffer to Nuremberg in 1469, and by Zainer to Augsburg about the same time.

The introduction of printing opened a new sphere of literary activity everywhere, but

¹ The merit of Gutenberg's invention was largely due to his superior method of making types by means of punch, matrix, and mould. When he began his experiments, he found already in common use paper, printing-ink, engraving in relief, some form of printing-press, and the art of printing playing-cards and block-books. It is possible even that isolated types were in use before his day (if anywhere, presumably at Haarlem and Avignon); but they could not be used to profit, because they were not scientifically made and sufficiently exact. That Gutenberg derived advantage from the successful experiments of the block-book printers of the preceding epoch is probable, but he must have added to the common stock of knowledge much more than he found. His type-founding methods were the only key to the invention of practical typography. He himself speaks of the new art as dependent upon the admirable proportion, harmony, and connection of the punches and matrices. (See De Vinne, *Invention of Printing*, 2nd ed. 1877.)

especially in England, for there it preceded, by just enough time to enable it to disseminate, the Renaissance and Reformation movements. It coincided with the formation of modern English, and followed by less than a hundred years the masterpieces of the transitional English tongue, which were still green in the popular memory, and which in its zeal for popularity it hastened to incorporate among its productions.

The English of the two centuries before Caxton's time was transitional between the Gothic dialect of Anglo-Saxon (akin to the Low Dutch and Frisian, still spoken on the shores of the Baltic and in North Holland), and modern English. The old English or Anglo-Saxon of Alfred's day, which had been spoken in England roughly from A.D. 800 to 1200; had become wholly unintelligible to the English, speaking the various dialects of Edward III.'s day. Under the early Plantagenets, English had sunk almost entirely to rustic and provincial use. Latin was used by the learned and by the clergy; French was the language of the schools, the law courts, the merchants, and the court. No English king, indeed, spoke English habitually before Henry IV. The town class and gentry of the thirteenth century were probably bilingual: they spoke French and English. It seemed doubtful which would predominate. During the century before Chaucer, however, English was rapidly gaining ground. The mixture of peoples had rubbed off the inflections of the old language. Anglo-Saxon was deficient in elegant, martial, and abstract terms. French supplied these, and Latin, through French, enriched the native dialects still more. The current English of London and the Eastern Midlands completely dropped the germanic syntax—the practice of putting the verb at the end of the sentence. It modified the old pronunciation and abandoned the old complexity of genders and cases.

The bed-rock or stony skeleton of the language was still Teutonic, but it was filled up and enriched by a soil of French words, phrases, and usages. By Chaucer's time the mixture was far forward, and we have arrived at a language with a mixed vocabulary and a straightforward accident that we can almost call "English," in a modern sense.

We can thus say that by a happy chance the Age of Caxton coincides for all practical purposes with the era of Modern England: for did it not witness, approximately at any rate, the fixation of the English speech as we now have it; the presentation in print of such speech-masters of aforetime¹ as were still intelligible to the multitude; the sunset of the old religion and the old romance; the dawn of the new learning and of the knowledge of the new world; and the rise of our own little despotic and insular Tudor dynasty? Numerous tomes have been written about the Tower of Babel, and even of the time before the Flood, in the annals of "English Literature" (so called). We have chosen deliberately to pass by Hengist and Horsa and the Heptarchy and to begin with the era when—even although three kinds of vernacular speech, wholly unconnected with English, remained unsubdued in our island—the blended English language of Shakespeare and the Bible had triumphed definitely alike over Anglo-Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Danish, and Anglo-Norman.

Apart from his services as standardiser of English, and primary selector of standard authors, Caxton's diligence alone was perfectly extraordinary; for he not only closely supervised all the work of his press, but also translated a number of books and treatises from the French in accordance with what he thought might be a popular demand. Caxton's position thus gives him a place of first-rate importance in our literature, and one that fully demands that a full-length portrait of him should be presented to the reader.

William Caxton was born, probably near Hadlow in the Weald of Kent, about 1422. The large Flemish admixture which had been in Kent since Edward III.'s introduction of foreign weavers into that county made the dialect a rude one. The sound of *a* was pronounced very broadly, and the words "ask" and "axe" are said to have been interchangeable. Caxton's name was probably pronounced Carston or Cawston. Since before the days of Sir Richard Whittington it had been the ambition of country parents in the south-eastern counties to place their sons with City merchants. William Caxton was apprenticed in 1438 to Robert Large, a London mercer in Old Jewry. Large, at his death in 1441, left

¹ Of these we estimate that four and four only can be said directly to modulate the literary life and thought of a later age—namely, Wyclif, Langland, Chaucer, and Gower; these four we have treated retrospectively.

EARLY PRINTED BOOKS

his industrious apprentice 20 marks, wherewith the young man set up in Bruges, then the capital of Burgundy, one of the greatest marts in Europe, and a famous centre of commercial education. By about 1462 Caxton had risen to be governor of the *Domus Angliæ*, or House of the English Guild of Merchant Adventurers, in the city. At the close of the same year he entered the service of the King's sister, Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy. He had already begun in 1469 to render into "the Fayre language of the Frenshe" the popular mediæval romance compiled by Raoul Le Fèvre, entitled *Le Recueil des Histoires de Troie*, and in the comparative leisure which he enjoyed in the service of the Duchess he completed it in September, 1471. The demand for the book was considerable, and it had to be copied again and again.

Nowhere in Europe could this work be done more efficiently than in Flanders. The wealth and cultivation of the Burgundian courtiers had stimulated a passion for beautiful books. Prizes were offered (as the reader of *The Cloister and the Hearth* will remember) to excite emulation among caligraphers; and corporations existed, comprising the scribes, bookbinders, engravers, illuminators, and other craftsmen, such as the *Frères de la Plume* at Brussels, and at Bruges the Guild of St. John—the patron saint of scribes—who did the work of manuscript reproduction, by means of a carefully devised division of labour, in an amazingly rapid, and at the same time accurate and systematic, manner.

There could unquestionably have been no difficulty in getting the book manifolded at Bruges by the ordinary mediæval methods; but it was just at this moment that news of the novel German mystery of printing had reached Flanders from Cologne. In 1471 we may take it for certain that the talk about this new method of book-making was in everybody's mouth at Bruges. Caxton was not long in resolving to put himself to the pains of learning the newly discovered art; and the immediate incentive, as he himself tells us, was

the prospect of a greater ease in multiplying his *Troy Book*. There was at Bruges, during the time of Caxton's sojourn there, an eminent caligrapher and stationer, named Colard Mansion, and probability seems to favour the theory that Caxton and Mansion learnt the elements of printing together at Cologne about 1472. Returning to Bruges in the following year, it is suggested that they set up a printing-press together there. They appear to have obtained a set of French types, and it was from them that Caxton printed, or paid Mansion to print, *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* (in folio, presumably in 1474). There also the second English book was printed, *The Game and Play of the Chess* (folio, 1475), translated through the French from a Latin treatise called *Ludus Scacchorum*. As continued to be the case after his migration to England, he printed usually upon paper made in the Low Countries, and rarely used vellum.

In 1476 Caxton left Bruges to practise his newly acquired art in his native country, and on November 18th, 1477, he printed at the Almonry, Westminster,¹ a book called *The Dictes and Sayinges of the Philosophers*. *The Dictes* is undoubtedly the first book printed in England.² Its type, though dissimilar from that of the two former books in which Caxton had been concerned, is identical with that used in Mansion's later books. It is therefore probable that Caxton brought to Westminster his printing-apparatus from Bruges. The translation (from the French *Les Dits Moreaux des Philosophes*) was from the pen of Earl Rivers, but was revised at the Earl's request by Caxton, who added a prologue and a chapter "touchyng Wymmen." *The History of Jason*, an English translation of Raoul Le Fèvre's *Les Faits . . . du . . . Chevalier Jason*, which seems to have been first printed by Mansion about 1478, was another early publication of Caxton's Westminster press. But the claim of precedence over *The Dictes*, as the first book printed in England, which had been put forward in its behalf, rests on shadowy evidence.

¹ In the parish of St. Margaret's, very near where the Westminster Palace Hotel now stands.

² *The Game of Chess* was formerly thought to be the first book printed in England. The reader will remember Jonathan Oldbuck's story of "Snuffy Davy," "with the scent of a sleuth-hound and the snap of a bull-dog" for a rare volume on a bookstall. "Snuffy Davy bought *The Game of Chess*, 1474, the first book ever printed in England, from a stall in Holland for about 2 groschen, or twopence of our money." He sold it to Osborne for £20. Osborne sold it to Askew for £60, and Askew for £170 to the King. Scott says that the story is true, but Blades (alas!) tears it to fragments with the insatiate fury of the hardened iconoclast.

From 1477 to 1491 Caxton was busily employed in printing and translating. In the case of these translations, almost always through the medium of the French, Caxton frequently speaks of himself as translator, where it is highly probable, particularly in the case of a book so voluminous as *The Golden Legend*, that he employed one or more understudies or assistants. There is no doubt, however, that he wrote the Prologues and Epilogues to the versions that he issued, and many of these are racy and individual enough, with a curious twist of Scottish humour, in which caution, apology, and rebuke are most quaintly intermingled. His "original Writings," including, together with these Prologues, the "last book" which he appended to Higden's *Policronicon*, are printed in William Blades's monumental *Life and Typography of William Caxton* (1861). Jason was soon followed by *The Canterbury Tales*, a large folio of 374 leaves. In 1480 John Lettou, a Lithuanian, started printing in London with a smaller and neater type than Caxton had used. His work stimulated Caxton to fresh efforts. In 1482 he was joined by William of Malines, though after 1484 Malines or "Machlinia" seems to have had a press of his own in Holborn; and after 1490 Machlinia's business was continued by Richard Pynson, a very excellent printer of Norman birth, who may have served for a short time under Caxton. Editions of Chaucer, Lydgate, Mandeville, Reynard the Fox, Sarum Missals, Hours, Etiquette and Cookery Books soon began to show that competition was active and the quest for popular work keen. Caxton hereupon introduced several improvements into his work, such as a smaller type, woodcuts, printed signatures, and improved spacing. Among his later productions were *The Golden Legend* or *Lives of Saints*, *The Fables of Æsop*, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, a portion of Virgil's *Æneid*, and a version of a Latin *Ars Moriendi*. Caxton himself edited all the books he printed, and he himself translated or personally supervised the translating of no less than twenty-two, including the *Troy Book* and *The Golden Legend*. He produced in all between eighty and ninety different books known to be genuine,

employing apparently six slightly variant types. Of these over fifty different specimens are contained in the British Museum, a grand total which is surpassed only by Lord Spencer's collection of sixty Caxtons, formerly at Althorp, now forming part of the Rylands Library at Manchester.

It is in the preface to the *Eneydos* that we get one of the last peeps at the venerable master-printer, in a wood-picture drawn by his own hand, where he describes himself "setting in his studye, where laye many and dyverse pamphettes and bookys," as he worked at the translation or corrected the proof-sheets of the *Eneydos*, the style of which evidently delighted him, as we find him in continuation stating that the "fayre and ornate termes" gave him "grete plasyr." He had then removed from his old establishment in the Almonry, at the sign of the Red Pale, but was still close to the Abbey; and we may imagine him listening to the heavy strokes of the clock hour after hour, as he sat diligently at his work, while quietly rejoicing in the busy sounds of the neighbouring press-room, where Wynkyn de Worde and his apprentices were deeply employed to his certain profit.¹ Caxton died at the close of 1491, and was buried in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster. On his death his materials passed into the hands of Wynkyn de Worde, his assistant, who continued to print from Caxton's fount in the same house at Westminster. In 1500, however, Wynkyn de Worde moved to the Sun, in Fleet Street, and died in 1534, having produced in all about 600 books.

Caxton was denounced by Gibbon for his omission of classical works from his list of publications. But, in the first place, Caxton was necessarily swayed by commercial considerations; while, in the second place, he had the instinctive desire of a printer to appeal to a popular rather than an academic circle. As a voluminous translator he did much to fix the literary language of England. He evidently knew French very thoroughly, though he was never very literal. He interpolated some passages and paraphrased others. As a typographer his work was homely: he seems to have had no idea of vying with the

¹ See the *History of the Art of Printing* by H. Noel Humphreys, who, however, does not agree with Blades as to Mansion's influence over Caxton, attributing the honour of being Caxton's tutor to Ulrich Zell, of Cologne. (Cf. Gordon Duff, *Early Printed Books*, 1893; H. R. Plomer, *English Printing*, 1900.)

artistic and luxurious workmanship of Mainz or Venice.¹ Homeliness, too, is the characteristic of the useful English prose which he employed in his numerous translations. He introduced a good many French and some Dutch words. Yet the general effect of his press-work was to arrest the decay of old Teutonic words, and to give stability to our spelling. It is largely owing to the fact that Caxton learnt printing abroad and first employed a fount of French type that the Old English *p* disappeared. Foreigners had no matrix for such a piece of type; consequently *th* usually replaces it, though the letter *y* is sometimes used for this purpose; hence the old form of “*y^e*” for “the.”

The guiding principle among the early printers was to make their printed books look as much like the best class of manuscript work, to which students were accustomed, as possible. They commenced their printed texts in just the same way as the manuscript writers had done. No title-page or imprint setting forth the writer's name, the date and place of execution of the work, and other details was provided; but the first page was headed merely with “Hic

Incipit” and the name of the treatise. Wynkyn de Worde was the first English printer systematically to adopt the use of title-pages after the death of Caxton in 1491.

Similarly, in the body of their work, by the adoption of a fount of type which resembled, as nearly as possible, the secretary hand of the period, it seems to have been the idea of the early printers to deprecate contrast and invite comparison with the best work of their predecessors, the scribes.² In this they have often been so successful that early printed pages have been mistaken for and even sold under the description of manuscripts. The enemies of the printers were not backward in denouncing them as cheats, and their productions as *contrefaçons*, or spurious imitations.

It was only quite gradually that the introduction of title-pages, of wood-blocks for capitals, of printed signatures, of a printed as opposed to a script character, and of regular spacing gave to printed books the distinctive character which they have now maintained for four centuries, and to the printer the unchallenged control of the lines of communication between the retina and the brain of man.

¹ In the first place, the MSS. that served as his models were inferior. No English type-founder of any note arose before John Day, who began printing about 1550, and the first type-founder who could really compete with the great foreign houses of France and Flanders was William Caslon (1692—1766).

² By some of its practitioners the new art was modestly described as “*Ars artificialiter scribendi*.” The modern or Roman style of type (flourishing at Venice under Jenson as early as 1470) was not commonly introduced into England until late in Henry VIII.'s reign. Even then the black-letter held its own in Bibles, proclamations, Acts of Parliament, ballads, and reprints of Old English authors such as Chaucer. When a prisoner was allowed benefit of clergy, a psalter was handed to him in the Gothic character, and he was asked to read a verse, called the “neck verse.” He mumbled something, and the clerk said the regular formula, “*Legit ut clericus*.” It is now used only for ornamental purposes. The old practice of using *u* and *v* interchangeably, *v* at the beginning and *u* in the middle of a word, persisted until the seventeenth century, and the old form of *e* in the body of a word (*ſ*) until late in the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER II

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

"Of Chaucer, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him."—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

"In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense."—DRYDEN.

Outline of Chaucer's life—His personal appearance and portraits—Three chronological periods of his work—*Troilus and Criseyde*—*The Legend of Good Women*—Chaucer's debt to French and Italian sources—*The Canterbury Tales*—The scheme of the poem—The qualities of Chaucer's poetry—History of the Chaucerian MSS. and text—Attempts to modernise the text.

OF the few masters of the old literature whose work Caxton sought to perpetuate by means of his new art, by far the most pre-eminent was Chaucer. From his fellow-craftsmen, Gower, Occleve, and Lydgate, Chaucer had received the fullest meed of praise. The French poet Eustace Deschamps had likened him in his lifetime to Socrates, Seneca, and Ovid. The brilliant group of Scots poets, Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lyndsay, had not very much in common one with the other, but they shared the same fervent admiration for Chaucer. Their poetic ancestor, James I., spoke of him in just the same way, as "his master." Caxton himself yielded to no man in his enthusiasm. "He excelleth in mine opinion," he wrote, "all other writers in our English; for he writeth no void words, but all his matter is full of high and quick sentence."

Of the poets who preceded Chaucer, there is only one whose poetry can claim to be in any degree readable at the present day, or to be even intelligible to those whose mother-tongue is English as it is now understood. This poet, of course, is Langland.¹ But there is really no comparing his *Piers Plowman* with *The Canterbury Tales*. One could as soon compare a sermon with a song. Chaucer is, in fact, to Langland as the sun is to the moon, and to the great corpus of dialect, Old English or

Anglo-Saxon, poetry of the remoter past, as the moon is to the Milky Way.

Geoffrey Chaucer, son of John Chaucer, a vintner,² was born in Thames Street, London, possibly about 1336—though there are authorities who go so far as to say probably about 1340. In 1356 he was a page in the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III., being specially attached to the service of the Duchess. In 1359 he accompanied Edward III. and his army upon that English King's last invasion of France, and was captured by the French near Rheims; but he was ransomed early in 1360, the King contributing £16 to the purpose. In 1367 he was one of the Yeomen of the King's Chamber, described as Edward's "Dilectus Valettus," and in receipt of a salary of 20 marks. By this time the poet was married, for in 1366 the name Philippa Chaucer appears as that of one of the Ladies of the Queen's Bedchamber. Like the Queen, she was probably a native of Hainault. In 1374 a pension of £10 was granted to Geoffrey and Philippa for good service. Chaucer was sent abroad several times upon diplomatic errands in the King's service. In 1372-3 he went on a mission to Genoa and Florence for the purpose of making an agreement with the former city as to a Genoese trading factory in England. On St. George's Day, 1374, he

¹ See Chap. III. of our Second Book.

² The family had been vintners and cordwainers (*calcearii*) for several descents, and were probably of French origin.

received from the King a grant of a pitcher of wine daily: this grant was afterwards commuted for a pension of 20 marks. In June of the same year he was made Comptroller of the Great Customs (wool, skins, and leather) at the Port of London. In the early summer of 1378 the Italian studies, which he had already commenced, were stimulated by another visit to Italy—on this occasion to treat with Bernabo Visconti, Lord of Milan, and Sir John Hawkwood, the famous condottiers, “touching the expediting of the King’s war.” During his absence he named the poet Gower as his legal representative. In 1382 he was made Comptroller of the Petty Customs, and four years later he was elected to Parliament as a Knight of the Shire for Kent. At this juncture, however, came a turning-point in his fortunes: he lost his two places in the customs, and had to realise his pensions for ready money. His dismissal was probably due to the fall of his patron, John of Gaunt, on the death of whose wife in 1369 he had written his *Book of the Duchess*. About the same time he seems to have lost his own wife and her pension. In 1389 things improved again on John of Gaunt’s return to power. Chaucer was made Clerk of the King’s Works at the Palace of Westminster, St. George’s Chapel at Windsor, various royal manors and lodges, and the mews at Charing Cross: but he lost these appointments in 1391. It was probably during these years of increased leisure and financial vicissitude that *The Canterbury Tales* were taken in hand. In 1394 Richard II. granted him a new pension of £20 a year, but we find him frequently anticipating it by small loans from the Exchequer. His fortunes revived under Henry IV., who may have recognised that Chaucer had some claim upon him as an old follower of the house of Lancaster: at any rate, a few days after his accession in 1399, by way of practical response to the veteran poet’s *Complaint to his Purse*, he granted him an additional pension of 40 marks. In December, 1399, Chaucer leased a tenement in the garden of St. Mary’s Chapel, Westminster, for the space of fifty years. He died there on October 25th, 1400, and was buried in St. Benet’s Chapel in Westminster Abbey,

where a monument, erected to his memory in Shakespeare’s time, became the nucleus of the now famous Poets’ Corner. A memorial window was unveiled in St. Saviour’s, Southwark, on October 25th, 1900.

As in the case of Shakespeare, many fictitious legends and traditions became entwined with the life of the fourteenth-century poet. Many of these were due to a fallacious autobiographic interpretation of certain passages in his poems. Some were due to the inventive genius of Leland and other biographical compilers of the sixteenth century. Great labour has been expended by recent investigators in getting rid of these fables, and basing the life upon the dry but unyielding foundation of authentic records.

Chaucer’s personal appearance is well known from a portrait of him by Occleve, which, in a greater degree than most portraits, confirms the ideas regarding him which one might gather from reading his works. This limning, or, as we should now call it, water-colour drawing, was introduced by Occleve into his book *De Regimine Principum* (now in the British Museum as Harleian MS. No. 4866). It is admittedly a memory-painting, yet it is the only one which is generally accepted as trustworthy. The figure, which is half-length, has a background of green tapestry. The poet wears a dark-coloured dress and hood; his right hand is extended, and in his left he holds a string of beads. From his vest a black case is suspended, which appears to contain a knife, or possibly a “penner” or pen-case. The expression of the countenance is intelligent; but the fire of the eye seems quenched, and evident marks of advanced age appear on the countenance. A deduction from the apparent age must be made to accord with the poet’s statement that he was old and unlusty at fifty-two. There are two other miniature portraits in manuscripts at the British Museum, upon one of which (Additional MS. 5141) there is little doubt that the quaint standing panel-portrait in the National Portrait Gallery is based. Some of these oil portraits¹ are of considerable interest, though it is not likely that any of them date back beyond the time of Elizabeth.

In the Occleve portrait we recognise the

¹ For reproduction of all the best miniatures and portraits, with notes thereon, the curious reader is referred to M. H. Spielmann’s interesting little monograph, *The Portraits of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1900).

meditative, downcast, yet slyly observant eyes, the broad brow, the sensuous mouth, the somewhat large yet well-shaped nose, and the general expression of good humour—all features which seem characteristic of the describer of the Canterbury pilgrims. The poet has a small forked beard, such as that ascribed to the Merchant in *The Canterbury Tales*; the hair is white, and the general appearance that of a man of about sixty. In manner, if we may accept the autobiographical indications of his greatest poem, the poet seemed “elvish, doing to no wight dalliaunce,” with the habit of staring on the ground, as if he would find a hair—a practice common with short-sighted people. There are, indeed, frequent hints of the poet's retiring habits, especially in *The Prologue to The Rime of Sir Thopas*, where Chaucer has put into the mouth of the host a half-bantering description of his personal appearance. We learn from other passages in his writings that he worked hard all day at the customs-books, and then, instead of recreation, he came home and applied himself to another book. “Dumb as a stone, studying and reading alway, till his head ached and his look became dazed, so that his neighbours, living at his very door, looked on him as an hermit,” though he tells us that he was “really no ascetic”—“his abstinence was little.”

By the more recent critics of Chaucer his work has been divided into three chronological periods—the French period, the Italian period, and the English period. From the writings of his fellow-countrymen, his predecessors in the use of the mother tongue from Cædmon to Langland, Chaucer derived little or nothing. He disregarded the old English tradition, the exponents of which he probably looked down upon as provincial and churlish. He began his literary career as a translator of French poems and adapter of French forms and ideas. To this period are assigned his translation of the *Roman de la Rose*, Chaucer's *A.B.C.* (an imitation, each of the twenty-three stanzas of which begins with a fresh letter of the alphabet), *The Complaint to Pity*, and *The Book of the Duchess*.

To the second period of Italian influence, which began about 1372, the date of the first Italian journey, are ascribed the chief of Chaucer's minor poems: *The Parliament of Foules* (birds) (1381), *Troilus and Criseyde*

(1381-2), *The House of Fame* (1382), and *The Legend of Good Women* (1385).

All the poems of Chaucer's first period are, comparatively speaking, those of a prentice hand or student in the art of poetry. A great advance is shown in both technical power and originality in the long narrative poem of *Troilus and Criseyde*, not more than one-third of which was derived from its ostensible original, the *Il Filostrato* of Boccaccio; but Chaucer owed much of the remainder to the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît and to the *Historia Trojana* of Guido delle Colonne. The story was based for the most part upon the mediæval Troy story which was subsequently utilised by Shakespeare and by Dryden. But it vivifies the beauty and passion of Criseyde and the humorous side of Sir Pandarus in a manner which was entirely fresh and strange to mediæval fiction. Boccaccio had used the *ottava rima* in his poem, but Chaucer uses the seven-line stanza with a mastery which indicates a rapid artistic growth about this period (1381-2). *Troilus* was followed by *The House of Fame*, a shorter poem of about a thousand octosyllabic couplets, in which more than in any other of his poems Chaucer seems to derive his inspiration from Dante. Next comes *The Legend of Good Women*, a misty prototype of Tennyson's exquisite *Dream* and the immediate precursor of *The Canterbury Tales*. For the details of his sad heroines Chaucer depends on Ovid, while as regards its general plan the poem is based more directly upon Boccaccio's *De Claris Mulieribus*. The Italian, however, describes 105 women, while Chaucer limits himself to twenty, including Penelope, Helen, Lucretia, Cleopatra, Thisbe, Dido, Laodamia, Canace, Ariadne, Medea, Philomela, and Alcestis. But of several of these the portraiture is barely commenced. The prologue to this poem is a worthy forerunner of the ripest production of Chaucer's pen, and the most famous, surely, of all prologues. Both it and *The Legend* furnish us with early examples of the great metre, that heroic couplet which was to become such a mainstay of English verse. Of the poems once ascribed to Chaucer, the two most notable and the most pleasing are *The Court of Love* and *The Flower and the Leaf*. The former was added to the canon by John Stow in 1561; the latter was first printed as Chaucer's by Speght in 1498. Both these poems have some affinity with the court-like romances of the early

eighties of Chaucer's career, both are admittedly smooth and pretty, and both alike are relentlessly cut adrift by the critics and grammarians of to-day.

From his French models Chaucer had learnt much—the most approved allegorical conventions of the school, the art of poetical embroidery by means of the introduction of quaint and learned illustrations, with the knack of graceful and chivalric expression. Above all, he learnt from them the forms of verse. From them he also learned the conventional poetic amble, the concomitant qualities of which were tendencies to incoherence, to garrulity, and to interminable repetition, degenerating at worst into the merest gabble. From the Italians, especially from Dante and Boccaccio, Chaucer learnt lessons of higher value. From Boccaccio, as a real master of narrative, he learnt the secret of construction—how to plan a story and carry it out in due proportion. He derived many stories from him, and he is always at his best when he is put upon his mettle by Boccaccio. From Dante, too, he learnt many details of artistic workmanship. But his main discovery among the Italians was the secret of harmonious composition. He no longer wrote with the licence of a *trouvère*. He has, now, a keen eye for what is redundant and tautological; he retouches, connects, groups, generalises, composes. In all these directions his powers were approaching maturity at the time of his framing the scheme of *The Canterbury Tales*.

The idea of the Canterbury pilgrimage as a framework for a series of stories seems to have been Chaucer's own. When we compare it with the devices for linking together stories used by Boccaccio or the editor of *The Arabian Nights*, we see the inherent superiority of Chaucer's plan. A pilgrimage to Canterbury, occupying about a week during the spring-time, afforded a pleasant holiday to most varied forms of English society. It was a very common plan for pilgrims to rendezvous at such an inn as the Tabard at Southwark, and to travel in parties on the road for purposes of safety. Chaucer brings his varied company of pilgrims before us with such vigour that, as Dryden said, one can see their humours, their features, and their very dress, as if one had supped with them at the Tabard.

Twenty-nine persons are gathered in all, who, for the space of a four days' journey, have the same object in view, and are going to live a common life. Forty-six miles from London is

the shrine, famous all Europe over, which contains the relics of Henry II.'s former adversary—the chancellor Thomas à Becket, assassinated on the steps of the altar in December, 1170, and canonised about three years afterwards. “Mounted each on his steed, either good or bad—the Knight on a beast sturdy though of indifferent appearance, the hunting Monk on a superb palfrey ‘as brown as is a berye,’ the Wife of Bath sitting astride her horse and showing her red stockings—they set out, taking with them mine host of the Tabard; and there they go at an easy pace, along the sunny road lined with hedges, among the gentle undulations of the soil. They will cross the Medway; then will pass beneath the walls of Rochester's gloomy keep, then one of the principal fortresses of the kingdom, sacked but recently by revolted peasantry; they will see the cathedral church, built a little lower down, and, as it were, in the shade. There are women and bad riders in the group; the Miller has drunk too much, and can hardly sit in the saddle; the way will be long. To make it seem short each one will tell tales, and the troop on its return will honour by a supper the best teller.”

It was a capital scheme, most excellently carried out, though not anything near to completion; for, instead of the hundred and twenty tales originally planned, only twenty were completed. One of the attractions of the scheme is that Chaucer, with the true instinct of genius, took care that each of the stories should be such as the speaker might naturally have told. Each tale was suited to the teller. The young Squire tells a tale of Eastern romance, ever fascinating to youth. The tipsy Miller obliges with a loose and comical story. The honest Clerk moves every heart with the touching story of Griselda. The tales of the gentles are full of high sentiment and pathos. Between times the narrator is full of banter and satire, of ridicule of marriage and of priests. In treating of such themes Chaucer enjoyed the freedom of a Molière. Elsewhere, in depicting the horseplay of the common folk, he takes the licence of a Smollett, descending occasionally even to filth.

All the tales are bound together, and that much better than in Boccaccio, by little veritable incidents, which spring from the characters of the personages, and are such as we light upon

in our travels. The horsemen ride on in a good humour through green fields in the April sunshine, and they hold converse. The Miller has drunk too much ale, and will speak, and for no man forbear. The Cook goes to sleep on his beast, and they play practical jokes on him. The Friar and the Summoner get up a dispute about their respective lines of business. The Host restores peace, makes them speak or be silent, like a man who has long presided in the inn parlour, and has often had to check brawlers. They pass judgment on the stories they listen to—declaring that there are few Griseldas in the world, laughing at the misadventures of the tricked carpenter, drawing a lesson from the moral tale. The poem is no longer a mere procession, but a painting in which the contrasts are arranged, the attitudes chosen, the general effect calculated, so that it becomes life and motion: the effect is that of a convex mirror, giving a brilliant reflection of a society that was already passing away; it concentrates the light of the past, the many-hued life and tumultuous movement of the Middle Ages, and projects the image with a dazzling clearness which penetrates the mists of the period of transition, and has become to modern England a possession beyond price.

The very form of *The Canterbury Tales* was expressive of consummate craftsmanship. The garden of Boccaccio, the supper-party of Grazzini, and the voyage of Giralaldi make a good enough thread for their stories, but exclude all save equals and friends. By choosing a pilgrimage, Chaucer puts us on a plane where all men are equal. His cluster of holiday-makers represents a microcosm of English society in the latter part of the fourteenth century. By making the Host of the Tabard always the central figure, he has happily united two of the most familiar emblems of life—the short journey and the inn. The familiar life of the every-day world was exactly what interested Chaucer most, by the time he had reached his majority and had left off imitating the notes of others. Chaucer's metaphysical interests were small; there was very little of the moonlight and mystery and awe of the world in his poems; he seldom or never sounds the deeper notes of terror and of pity. The light upon his pages is that of

common day. Among his most salient characteristics are tolerance and good humour. His motto might have been "Live and let live." Though he lived during the Hundred Years' War, and had himself been a captive, not a word in depreciation of the French nation will be found in his poems. No man thought more easily than he did or revealed with greater precision the sectional prejudices and strange egotisms which make up the human comedy. Yet he seldom or never strips the very heart and soul of a man of its integument. With Shakespeare a tragedy means the ruin of a man's mind. With Chaucer it is merely the external fall from high estate. In his manner of depicting a man, from the external side only, he has more in common with Scott and Fielding than with Shakespeare¹; yet there is no doubt that Chaucer stands with Shakespeare, Milton, and Tennyson—to whom some would add Burns and Byron, others perhaps Shelley and Wordsworth—among the *dii majores* of English poets. Nor shall we find reason to wonder at this, when we recognise the qualities that go to compensate for his defective sympathy with some of the profounder aspirations of the human intelligence. In defining these qualities, we can hardly do better, in the first place, than seek guidance from Dryden, the earliest and one of the best of English critics. Dryden's "Here is God's plenty" is still perhaps the best short criticism of Chaucer extant. "The father of English poetry," wrote Dryden, "Chaucer is a perpetual fountain of good sense. A man of wonderfully comprehensive nature, he followed Nature everywhere, but he is never so bold as to go beyond her. He knew where to leave off. As for his versification, he regarded it presumably as being accommodated to the ears of his own time, somewhat uncouth, but with a rude sweetness as of a Scots tune about it." Let us compare this with some of the characteristic features discovered by one of the best of Chaucer's modern critics. As a narrative poet, says Professor Lounsbury, Chaucer has no equal in our tongue. As a pioneer of English versification, it may be said of him, as of Augustus, that he found Rome of brick and left it of marble. Among other distinctive features, he would specially have us observe

¹ "If we could take thirty per cent. of Goldsmith, fifty of Fielding, and ten of Sir Walter Scott, and vitalise this compound with the spirit of the fourteenth century, we should get perhaps fairly near to another Chaucer."—A. W. POLLARD.



From a Painting by T. Stothart, R.A.

The Canterbury Pilgrims

the originality of his treatment of borrowed material, the naturalness of his language, the apparent absence of effort in his writing, and the refined sportiveness which continually corrects and relieves the English tendency to a dull seriousness. Among his characteristic defects he instances the intrusion of irrelevant learning, improper digressions, rude dialects, steep anachronisms, and an unreasonable fondness for the sententious Boëthius. The general conclusion we are compelled to draw is that Chaucer was a supreme artist, and the conviction is strengthened when we consider the rich humour (the accumulated fund of a man of the world, who had seen and heard all that was best in his time) which permeates almost every poem that he wrote. No one has surpassed Chaucer in good-humoured banter, a quality which the poet possessed in such perfection that he was able continually to laugh at himself without a suspicion either of bitterness or of bad taste. If character may be divined from an author's writings, Chaucer was a good man, genial, sincere, hearty, temperate of mind, more wise perhaps for this world than the next, but thoroughly humane and friendly with God and men. To this profound humanity of soul Chaucer joined that marvellous power of speech which is the talisman of the great poet.

For four out of the five centuries which have elapsed since his death, Chaucer's poems were so imperfectly transcribed and printed, that "he who hardly ever wrote a bad line, and whose music and mastery of words are almost unrivalled, was apologised for as some rude rhymers." His works were praised for their *learning*, printed in black-letter as an antiquarian curiosity, paraphrased and translated, till he could not himself have recognised them. As a matter of fact, Chaucer's work, so far from being "rude," was nearly all of the highly finished variety; and, in strong contrast to Shakespeare, the poet took a keen interest in the text of his poems. He went so far as to utter a memorable malediction against all careless scribes. In spite of the misdeeds of such nefarious persons, Chaucer's text has come down to us in a very fairly satisfactory state.

There are existing about fifty manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales*, none dating back to the poet's lifetime, but several to the fifty years which followed his death: the two best of these are the Ellesmere MS. and

Harleian MS. 7334 in the British Museum. There are numerous diversities among the manuscripts, due to the normal corrupting influences to which the work, whether of professional scribes or monkish scribes, is ordinarily liable: viz. carelessness; misreadings, due to ignorance; conceited corrections, in the supposed interests of grammar, local usage, style, or morality. Caxton, a great admirer of Chaucer, printed *The Canterbury Tales* in 1478, and again in 1483. They were reprinted by Pynson, 1492, and Wynkyn de Worde, 1498. In 1532 Francis Thynne prepared a collective edition of Chaucer's works, including many pieces that were not really by Chaucer. In 1598 Thomas Speght issued an edition with a very erroneous life, based upon materials collected by Leland and John Stow the antiquary. These texts remained the standard ones for many years; and inasmuch as they were based upon a manuscript now lost, they are still valuable for purposes of comparison. With the idea of tinkering the prosody into conformity with our language as it is now refined, Urry played fearful havoc with the old grammatical forms in his edition in 1721, in which the text was first emancipated from black-letter. *The Prologue* and *Knight's Tale* were edited as a specimen, in 1737, by Thomas Morell. Thomas Morell's work marked a great advance in the direction of conservative scholarship, but it was surpassed in every way by the work of Thomas Tyrwhitt, whose great edition of *The Canterbury Tales* was brought out in 1775, and was followed by a fifth volume containing a glossary in 1778. Tyrwhitt was to Chaucer what Theobald was to Shakespeare and Spedding to Bacon—one of the few great English editors; like Steevens and Malone, he was thoroughly saturated in black-letter.

Thomas Wright had the audacity to impugn Tyrwhitt's scholarship, and especially his text, which he described as "made up." Accordingly, between 1847 and 1851 he brought out a new text, based, not upon a collation, but upon a single manuscript (Harleian 7334, in British Museum). Whether from a linguistic or a literary point of view the result was in every respect inferior; but it marked the dawn of a great Chaucerian revival. In 1862 a great advance was made by Professor Child's studies in Chaucerian grammar. In 1867 the foundation of the Chaucer Society was due to the indefatigable zeal of Dr. Furnivall, and through

its agency great strides have been made in the study of the versification, pronunciation, and philology of the poet. The indirect influence of these studies has been to make men more familiar with Chaucer's English than were our forebears of the eighteenth century. Since the time of Gray and Warton and Scott there has been a great revival of old literature and old art, and a very tangible outcome of this has been the introduction of a number of old words. As Hugo and Merimée invigorated French by the revival of old words, so in England, only rather before in point of date, Scott and Keats gave a fresh currency to numerous words and expressions. The revival of old literature such as *Le Morte d'Arthur* and *Piers Plowman*, and of the old drama, and the renewal of love for the English of the Bible and what Chesterfield called "the bad English of the Psalms"—the whole tendency, in fact, of the art of such men as Tennyson, Holman Hunt, Pugin, Sir Gilbert Scott, Rossetti, Ruskin, and, above all, perhaps William Morris, for whom the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries cannot be said to have existed—was to bring the Englishmen of their generation infinitely nearer to the Middle Ages than were those who lived in the ages of Dryden and Pope, and even of Dr. Johnson. The resultant of all these forces has been the devotion of an ardent yet minute study to Chaucer, and the evolution of a text which is probably superior to that we shall ever have of Shakespeare. This is partly due to the fact that numerous manuscripts of Chaucer remain for comparison,¹ and partly due to the fact that, unlike Shakespeare, Chaucer hardly ever wrote carelessly, hurriedly, or obscurely. He is, moreover, very regular in his versification, and was very averse to sacrificing perspicuity in the interests of condensation. Some of Chaucer's words are still unexplained, some of his allusions have never been cleared up; but his constructions have

been mastered, and the general drift of what he has to say is never in doubt.

Chaucerian scholarship may be said to have had two flowering periods,²—one in the middle of the eighteenth century, which resulted in the ripe fruit of Tyrwhitt's edition; the second in the sixties of the nineteenth century, and the outcome the excellent editions which are now in our hands: Skeat's critical edition* (Clarendon Press) of Chaucer's *Complete Works* (7 vols., 1894-7); the Globe edition of the *Works* (1 vol., 1898); and Lounsbury's edition of the *Complete Works* and glossary (2 vols., New York, 1900). These texts are based nominally upon the same materials, but they vary considerably in detail, showing the different criteria of judgment, both as regards literary taste and relative importance of manuscripts. Whereas, too, Skeat's edition normalises the orthography, the Globe follows a single manuscript (the Ellesmere), wherever its reading is feasible. Yet the differences between the scholars are small compared with those between the would-be popularisers of the poet. As there have been two harvests of Chaucer's criticism, so there have been two distinct movements for the modernisation of the *The Canterbury Tales*: (1) that associated with Dryden and Pope, and (2) that culminating in the efforts of Leigh Hunt, Richard Horne, Wordsworth, and Cowden Clarke. The phraseology, spelling, and constructions of Chaucer being in many respects obsolete, it was the object of these admirers of the "Homer of English poetry" to attire his best productions in a modern garb. The scholars have almost with one accord discountenanced these attempts, and have covered their projectors with contempt and ridicule. That much is inevitably lost in the process of translation is a proposition which is of course unassailable. Yet it is mere affectation to maintain, as many Chaucerians do, that an untrained reader can master essential pecu-

¹ Six of the best manuscripts—Ellesmere, Hengwrt, Cambridge Univ., C.C.C. Oxford, Petworth, Lansdowne—were edited side by side by Dr. Furnivall for the Chaucer Society (1868).

² The vicissitudes of Chaucer's fame form the subject of a very interesting passage in Churton Collins's essays on the predecessors of Shakespeare: "Take Chaucer. In 1500 his popularity was at its height. During the latter part of the sixteenth century it began to decline. From that date to the end of William III.'s reign—in spite of the influence which he undoubtedly exercised over Spenser, and in spite of the respectful allusions to him in Sidney, Puttenham, Drayton, and Milton—his fame had become rather a tradition than a reality. In the following age the good-natured tolerance of Dryden was succeeded by the contempt of Addison and the supercilious patronage of Pope. Between 1780 and 1782 nothing seemed more probable than that the writings of the first of England's narrative poets would live chiefly in the memory of antiquarians. In little more than half a century afterwards we find him placed, with Shakespeare and Milton, on the highest pinnacle of poetic renown."

liarities in the space of an hour, and can then enjoy his Chaucer with the best. The number of persons competent to enjoy the niceties of Chaucer's art is necessarily restricted; but the number of persons who could enjoy the substance and matter of his poems, irrespective of the precise manner of presentation, is unbounded—a consideration which inclines one

rather strongly to sympathise with Dryden, when he says, "I think I have just reason to complain of those who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up as misers do their grandam Gold, to look on it themselves and hinder others from making use of it."

For general criticism of Chaucer the ordinary reader will do well first to scan what the literary historians have to say: among them he will find much admirable criticism in Stopford Brooke,* Henry Morley, Taine, Jusserand, Chambers, and Ten Brink*; above all, in Warton's and in Courthope's respective histories of English poetry.

If the reader has need of a Chaucer manual, he has again a considerable choice. There is an excellent little *Chaucer Primer*, by Mr. A. W. Pollard; there is also a highly condensed *Guide to Chaucer and Spenser*, by F. G. Fleay (1877); *The Age of Chaucer*, by Mr. F. J. Snell (1901); and Dr. Ward's *Chaucer*, in the Men of Letters Series; in addition to Skeat's *Student's Chaucer* (1895) and *The Chaucer Canon* (1900). For interesting reading about Chaucer the reader will probably find most to entertain him in the three volumes of *Studies in Chaucer* (London, 1892), by a Yale professor, T. R. Lounsbury. These studies form a series of agreeable, if somewhat diffuse, magazine essays rather than an organic book. In the later stages of his Chaucer course the student will naturally depend much on the Transactions of the Chaucer Society. Yet more important, perhaps, than any of these aids to study is the light thrown upon the subject by such essayists as Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt, Alexander Smith in *Dreamthorpe*, and J. R. Lowell in *My Study Windows*. Among notable periodical essays should be mentioned two articles in *Blackwood* (vols. ii. and lvii.); two in *Macmillan* (vols. xxiv. and xxvii.)—one by Stopford Brooke, the other by Furnivall; and two in *The Quarterly* (January, 1873, emphasising the affinity between Chaucer and Shakespeare; and April, 1895, a review of Skeat's edition of Chaucer).

CHAPTER III

MORAL GOWER—THE “MORTE D'ARTHUR”

“O moral Gower, this book I directe
To thee, and to the philosophical 'Strode,
To vouchensauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benigneites and zeles gode.”

CHAUCER, *Troilus and Criseyde*.

Warton's criticism of Gower—*Confessio Amantis*—Sir Thomas Malory—*Morte d'Arthur*—Its influence in English literature.

CHAUCER'S *Canterbury Tales* was probably the fourth separate book printed by Caxton at Westminster, and is usually dated about 1478. Five or six years later the printer produced a second edition of the *Tales* with woodcuts. About the same time that he produced this second edition, or perhaps a little before it, Caxton set to work on a folio edition of Chaucer's recognised foil, John Gower. He tells us himself that he finished printing the *Confessio Amantis* on September 2nd, 1483. Two years later he gave to the world *The Noble Histories of King Arthur and of Certain of his Knights*, by Sir Thomas Malory (Westminster, folio, July 31st, 1485). As, among the eighty odd books which Caxton printed at Westminster, these are two of the most famous (if not quite the most famous, with the exception of two or three of Caxton's translations and the three books of Chaucer's which he printed), we shall give here some account of the books and of their authors, as being early examples of the work of the printing-press in perpetuating sound literature.

John Gower was born before Chaucer, probably in the early twenties of the fourteenth century (1323-6). He came of a Kentish family, and appears to have been a man of some consideration and an esquire in his native county. It would seem as if he gained his wealth, or it was gained for him, as a merchant; but it is difficult to reconcile the immense volume of his poetry with active commercial life. In later life he must have been practically a literary recluse. He died

in August or September, 1408, leaving a widow, Agnes, and was buried in the Priory of St. Mary Overy (now St. Saviour's Cathedral, Southwark), to the rebuilding of which he was a generous contributor.

The best and most concise account of Gower's poetry is that given by Thomas Warton in his *History of English Poetry* (1778). “Gower's capital work,” says Warton, “consisting in three parts, is entitled *Speculum Meditantis*, *Vox Clamantis*, *Confessio Amantis*.” The third and last portion of this work was completed in 1393. The first, or *Speculum Meditantis*, was written in Anglo-French twelve-line octosyllabic rhymes in ten books, dealing primarily with the nature of virtue and vice, the errors of man, and the path of regeneration through the aid of our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Virgin Mary, whose life the poem ends by commemorating.

The second poem, the *Vox Clamantis*, or voice of one crying in the wilderness, contains seven books of Latin elegiacs; it is primarily a metrical chronicle of the great social upheaval of 1381, denouncing Wat Tyler, the rabble rout, the maddened serfs, and the Lollards in no measured terms; but pointing out at the same time the grievances by which the community was burdened, the rapacity of the clergy, the knavery of lawyers and merchants, the prevalence of sensual indulgence, extortion, and rash governance. In later years (being then a staunch adherent of Henry IV., who had conferred on him the Lancastrian emblem or collar of SS) Gower appended to

his poem a *Chronicon Tripartitum*, dealing in a tone of far greater candour with the misgovernment of Richard II.

The *Confessio Amantis* is an English poem containing a prologue, seven books on seven deadly sins, and one on the duties of a king—in all over thirty thousand eight-syllabled rhymed lines—first printed by Caxton in 1483. The ravages of the seven sins, Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, Lust, are illustrated by a series of stories loosely strung together somewhat after the manner of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. The book was written at the command of Richard II., who, meeting the poet rowing on the Thames near London, invited him into the royal barge, and, after much conversation, requested him to "book some new thing." In spite of age and infirmity Gower laboured nearly ten years at the composition and revision of this poem, completed in 1393 (with additions criticising the government of Richard II., which it is difficult to place before 1397).

"Considered in a general view," says Warton, "the *Confessio Amantis* may be pronounced to be no unpleasing miscellany of those shorter tales which delighted the readers of the Middle Ages." And when he has a tale to narrate, it must be admitted that Gower does his duty by it. In the unfolding of a narrative, however well worn the theme may be, there is an ease and a fluency about Gower's development of the story which is suggestive of the ripeness as well as of the garrulity of old age. The worst of Gower's stories is that we always know they are there merely to furnish occasion for a homily. They are usually illustrations of deadly sins—never, as in *The Canterbury Tales*, of concrete personalities. The dramatic element hardly came within Gower's purview. Gower's characters are perambulating moralities—remote, indeed, from the breathing types of the Tabard.¹ The rival poets seem to have been more closely allied in friendship than in art; it is true that we find Gower making a playful hit at the irrepressible garrulity of Canterbury pilgrims,

and Chaucer marvelling at the latitude assumed by moralists in their choice of illustrations; but the one irreparable blow which the younger poet inflicted upon the vitality of his senior by dubbing him for all time "Moral Gower" can only have been undesigned.

Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, completed in 1470, was the last important work finished before the introduction of printing, and our knowledge of it depends wholly upon the printed text, for no manuscript of it is known to be extant. Caxton printed it in 1485 in response to a demand for a book about the single English representative among the nine worthies. The author, Sir Thomas Malory, Knight, the son of John Malory by Alice, daughter of John Revell, served under Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, Captain of Calais, about 1430, was knighted in 1445, and sat for Warwickshire in Parliament. He finished his book at his seat of Newbold Revell, in Warwickshire; died next year in March, 1471; and was buried at the Grey Friars, near Newgate. There is evidence to show that he marched under the standard of Edward IV. against the Lancastrian forces in the North in 1468, and that he was subsequently excluded, as a member of Warwick's faction, from the general pardon granted by Edward in that year. He was probably born in the reign of Richard II., and thus serves as an important link in our literature between Chaucer and Caxton, who roughly edited the work which Malory had left unrevised. The popularity of the romances of chivalry which Caxton had translated from the French may very possibly have been the stimulus which prompted Malory to undertake the work in the closing years of his life. But Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is much more than a translation; it is, in fact, a welding together from different fabrics of the main sources which go to forming the Arthurian cycle. By the perfect adaptation of his treatment to the subject, Malory succeeded in handing down the romance, with unimpaired freshness, from mediæval to modern literature. In both form and style the compilation compares very

¹ Chalmers included the work in his *Collection of English Poets*. The first modern edition is that of 1857, by Dr. R. Pauli, who embodied the biographical discoveries made by Sir Harris Nicolas in *The Retrospective Review*, and showed Gower's relations to the political history of the time. A popular edition was included by Prof. Henry Morley in his *Carisbrooke Library* (1888), and Gower was also treated at considerable length in the fourth volume of his *English Writers*. The first really critical edition adapted for philological study was that of Gower's *Opera Omnia* in French, Latin, and English, prepared for the Clarendon Press by Prof. G. C. Macaulay (1899), who has also (1903) edited *Selections from the Confessio Amantis*.

favourably with the *Cent Nouvelles* and other French *recueils* of the period.

In the main, however, the work is, what Caxton declares it to be, "done out of certain books of French," such as the *Merlin* of Robert de Borron and his successors, the French romances of *Tristan* and of *Lancelot*, with supplementary additions from some manuscript metrical romances in Old English on the *Morte d'Arthur*.

In spite of the heterogeneous character of its component parts, it must be admitted that the *Morte d'Arthur* is singularly liable to the charge of monotony. The repetition of incidents, of images, and of phrases may be likened to that in the earlier Indian epics and in the later pseudo-epic of Ossian. The texture out of which the romance is woven is the embodiment of the literary imagination of the Middle Ages. The colouring and imagery appeal almost exclusively to those who combine an instinctive love for mediæval romance

with strong imaginative and visualising power. To the uninitiated reader the artistic convention which characterises the phrasing has no power of carrying conviction, and the power of deriving pleasure from the narrative is limited to a bare appreciation of the story. By such the *Morte d'Arthur* is best appreciated through the medium of a paraphrase. Only by those readers whose poetic instinct is stimulated by the surpassing colour and imagery of the detail can the *Morte d'Arthur* be assimilated with a genuine sense of enjoyment. To the romantic poets in a special degree the *Morte d'Arthur* has been an inexhaustible fountain of allegory and of poetic inspiration. It was freely used by Spenser for his *Faerie Queene*, by Tennyson for his *Idylls of the King*, by Swinburne for his *Tristram of Lyonesse*, and by Matthew Arnold for his *Tristram and Iseult*; while in the present day it has formed the staple of the quaintly perfumed romances of Maurice Hewlett.¹

¹ Subsequent to Caxton's folio of 1485 six black-letter editions of the *Morte d'Arthur* appeared between 1498 (Wynkyn de Worde) and 1634. A three-volume edition by Haslewood in Roman type appeared in 1816. Another, with an introduction by Robert Southey, in 1817. Later editions include one by Thomas Wright, 1856; the Globe edition, with introduction by Sir E. Strachey, 1868 (the best of the modernised editions); and the standard *Le Morte d'Arthur*, by Syr Thomas Malory, reprinted and edited, with introduction and glossary, by H. O. Sommer, with an essay on Malory's prose style by Andrew Lang (3 vols., 1889-91). Another very elaborate edition, though with a modernised text, is *Le Morte d'Arthur . . . with introduction by Professor J. Rhys, and illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley* (2 vols., 1893-4). Malory's indebtedness to the respective manuscripts has been laboriously traced by Oskar Sommer in his edition; most of the later and more highly embellished versions of the legend can be followed back to a common original through such works as the alliterative *Morte Arthur* of the Scots poet Huchown, the *Lancelot* of Walter Map, the *Brut* of Layamon and Wace, and the *Historia Britonum* of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The substratum of the vast body of Arthurian legend was the fabulous tale of the wizard Merlin (a relic of the old Celtic mythology), and of the obstacles which Arthur had to surmount before he reached his rightful throne. Upon this were grafted tales of knightly fortitude, of erring passion, of mortal feud. And the whole was surmounted by the mysterious legend of the Quest of the Holy Grail—the legend, that is, of a protracted search for the blood of Christ, preserved in a small casket or vessel of some kind after the Crucifixion by Joseph of Arimathea. This curious fable was of far later date than the nucleus of Arthurian tradition, and there seems little doubt that it was originally brought from the East by the early Crusaders. For the older strata of Welsh mythic romance the reader is referred to the series entitled *Popular Studies in Romance, Mythology, and Folklore*, published by the accomplished Celtic scholar David Nutt. He may then proceed to Professor Rhys's *Studies in the Arthurian Legend* (1891), a work of the highest authority, but one that presupposes a considerable knowledge of the subject—more especially of the writer's own Hibbert Lectures on *Celtic Heathendom* (1888). It must be admitted that neither the *Confessio Amantis* nor the *Morte d'Arthur* can stand the juxtaposition of *The Canterbury Tales*. Their vivid humanity renders Malory wan, attenuated, and bloodless in comparison. Ascham and Latimer attacked its morals, and it went into a long eclipse from 1634 to 1816; but it emerged then to strike a priceless blow for purity and brevity in speechcraft as opposed to the tasteless, polysyllabic verbiage of the post-Johnsonian school.

CHAPTER IV

THE SCOTS POETS

"What Voltaire said of Dante is literally true of such poets as Henryson, Douglas, and Dunbar. We simply take them on trust."—CHURTON COLLINS.

The Chaucerian tradition in Scotland—Robert Henryson—*Robene and Makyne*—William Dunbar—*The Golden Targe*—Comparisons of Dunbar with Chaucer and Burns—Gavin Douglas—Sir David Lyndsay—His religious satires.

THE arbitrary date 1475 is followed in English literature by a century of second-rate writers, in other words, of preparatory and tentative work. Among the names of those who, for want of better, we must describe as the leaders in English literature, there is not one that evokes enthusiasm, there is scarcely one that awakes an echo in the halls of remembrance. It is perhaps somewhat difficult to believe, but is yet the fact, that when we have enumerated Hawes, Skelton, More, Tyndale, Latimer, Wyatt, Ascham, Surrey, Udall, to whom might possibly be added Lord Berners, Heywood, and Foxe, we have named all the prominent writers of the century that followed Caxton in England. It is true that they produced among them one book of quite the first rank (the *Utopia*), but that was written in Latin. In Scotland it was very different; there the true Chaucerian tradition was handed on, and brilliant verse in Chaucer's vein was deftly wrought by apt pupils.

Most Chaucerian of these Scottish disciples of the English maker was Robert Henryson (an interesting link between the days of James I. and those of James IV.), who seems to have been educated abroad before he was admitted at Glasgow University in 1462. Subsequently he became schoolmaster at Dunfermline, and died there at a ripe old age before 1506, when Dunbar mentions him as one of the departed. The principal works of

Henryson are *Moral Fables of Æsop, Orpheus and Eurydice, The Testament of Cresseide* (a sequel to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*), and the early pastoral (perhaps it should be described as the earliest, as it is certainly one of the best, in the English tongue) *Robene and Makyne*. This last, as its merit deserves, is the best known of Henryson's poems; it was included in Percy's *Reliques of English Poetry* and in many later anthologies. Robin and Marion were traditional names for rustic lovers in the Middle Ages. The earliest pastoral play in France, by Adam de la Halle (thirteenth century), bears the title *Robin et Marion*.

The amount of character and of local colour which Henryson managed to impart to these pieces is striking; they are full of playful satire, while as delineations of contemporary manners they merit a close appreciation. Behind the rude and archaic phraseology of *Robene and Makyne* lies hid an eclogue of a very high poetic merit.

This charming little pastoral may be termed a "sport" in Scottish literature, for we have nothing like it again until we come to Ramsay's *Gentle Shepherd*. It is written in ballad metre, to which Henryson recurs in *The Bludy Serke* (the story of a blood-stained garment, bequeathed by a mortally wounded knight to a king's daughter, whom he had rescued from a giant's dungeon), and in the quaint alliterative *Garmond of Gude Ladeis*.¹

¹ A large proportion of Henryson's poems were first printed from manuscript sources by David Laing in 1865—largely from George Bannatyne's manuscript in the Advocates' Library at Edinburgh, and from the Maitland manuscripts in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. The *Morall Fabillis* were, however, printed in 1570, and *The Testament of Cresseide* in 1593. Selections from Henryson have been very numerous. Allan Ramsay gave some in his *Evergreen* (1724), so did Percy and Lord Hailes. There is a good one, with glossarial notes on every page, in G. Eyre Todd's *Mediaeval Scottish Poetry* (Glasgow, 1892). The standard edition is *The Poems and Fables of Robert Henryson (first collected, with notes and memoir), by David Laing* (Edinburgh, 1866).

But the greatest of these Scottish disciples of Chaucer was admittedly William Dunbar¹—"Dunbar quha language had at large," as Sir David Lyndsay compendiously called him. Of less tender and graceful fancy than either James I. or Henryson, Dunbar had more original genius. In choice of subjects he has some affinity with Jan Steen or Hogarth, but his outlines are as sharp and relentless as Dürer's. With a Heinesque ribaldry and malice he combines something of the fatalistic temper of Villon. *Timor mortis conturbat me*, he groans.

Dunbar graduated at St. Andrews University in 1479, being then probably near twenty years of age. He was at one time a Franciscan friar, in which capacity he made good cheer on the English roads; but he seems to have thrown off the habit and taken to diplomacy. Subsequently he took priest's orders (in 1504), but he continued to lead the life of a courtier, and his name disappears significantly after the battle of Flodden (September 9th, 1513).

Dunbar's most celebrated poems were *The Thistle and the Rose*, *The Golden Targe*, and the allegorical satire called *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*. *The Thistle and the Rose* was a political allegory, occasioned by the marriage of James IV. of Scotland with Margaret Tudor, eldest daughter of Henry VII., King of England—an event in which the whole future political state of both nations was vitally interested, and which ultimately produced the union of the two crowns and kingdoms. It was finished on May 9th, 1503, in plenty of time for the Queen's arrival in Scotland after a magnificent progress from Richmond to Edinburgh. The Rose is hailed Queen by the flowers, and her praises are sung by a chorus of birds, the sound of which awakens the poet from his dream.

The design of Dunbar's *Golden Targe* is to show the gradual and imperceptible influence of love when too far indulged over reason; it is tintured throughout with the morality and imagery of *The Romaunt of the Rose* and *The Flower and the Leaf* of Chaucer. The opening scene of the rising sun on the spring landscape is delineated in the manner of Lydgate, yet with more strength, distinctness, and exuberance of ornament. It concludes with the laboured eulogy of Chaucer ("flower imperial and rose of orators"), Moral Gower, and Lydgate laureate.

In dealing with the seven deadly sins, Dunbar was treating a hackneyed theme. *The Romaunt of the Rose* personifies a series of heinous sins. Chaucer, in *The Parson's Tale*, expounded them at some length; Gower's *Confessio Amantis* is composed of tales illustrating the same deadly seven; Lydgate had treated the theme somewhat differently in his imitation of the old French *Danse Macabre*. Dunbar's *Dance* describes a procession of the sins personified before the devil in hell, and the conception is vigorously, and at the same time humorously, handled. The devil having commanded the dance to begin, the seven deadly sins appear, and present a mummery (in imitation, it may be, of one of the miracle or clerk plays, as they were called in Scotland), with the newest gambols, just imported from France.

Among the shorter poems, of which Dunbar is prolific, several dwell upon the irredeemable flight of time and the ruthless stroke of death. One of the best of these is *The Lament for the Makaris*, written when he was ill, probably about 1507. His short meditations on the "Headache" and on "Wyntir" show him to have been a connoisseur of melancholy. But Dunbar was a man of an infinity of moods; the shadow on human existence could not

¹ The chief predecessors of Dunbar in Scottish poetry were: (1) John Barbour, a pensioner of King Robert II., and Archdeacon of Aberdeen, who wrote his versified chronicle or rhyming narrative of the wanderings, trials, sufferings, and fortitude of the great Robert Bruce about 1376-8, and died at Aberdeen, at a good old age, in March, 1396. (2) Andrew of Wynton wrote a somewhat similar but inferior rhyming chronicle from the beginning of the world down to 1406. Then comes the famous *Kingis Quair* (The King's Quire or Book) of (3) King James I. Born in 1394, James was captured by the English at sea in 1406, and was imprisoned for eighteen years, mainly in the Tower of London. While in prison James was carefully educated; he became a disciple of Chaucer, and, though the point is much disputed, there is still good reason to believe that he and no other wrote the *Quair*—a beautiful description of love at sight and of the solace derived from love by a captive; a classic example of the love allegory first developed in Italy and France, but naturalised in England by Chaucer's *Romaunt of the Rose* and *Troilus and Criseyde*; and written in the seven-line stanza of *Troilus*, known since the time of Gascoigne as the "rhyme royal." James I., who was murdered in 1437, was followed at the other end of the social scale by (4) Blind Harry the Minstrel, who flourished about 1470, and wrote a patriotic chronicle in heroic verse on *Wallace*, founded mostly on traditional stories of the national hero.

escape his saturnine humour; yet he was well disposed to be cheerful and even merry—witness his “Without Glaidnés availis no Tressour” and “For to be blythe me think it best.” From his *Surrexit dominus*, his realistic *Passioun of Christ*, or his grand nativity chant opening with the Latin descant *Rorate celi desuper*, we turn to a scene of satirical comedy such as *The Treatise of Two Married Women and a Widow*, in which he fathoms the depths of obscenity. There is a delightful pendant to this in the Dutch cabinet-piece of *The Two Cummers*, two old gossips, a Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig of the sixteenth century, over their mutchkins, complaining, “This lang Lenteren makis me lene.” Everywhere alike his poetry is resonant with verse-craft, and is nourished by a thousand freshets of sparkling wit. A couplet glistens and one breathes the sharp air of the northern spring. Yesterday, says he, the season soft and fair

Come in as fresh as peacock fedir;—
This day, it stingeth like an addir.

A beautiful example of complimentary verse is afforded in Dunbar's panegyric of London, with the burden, “London, thou art the flower of cities all!” composed in 1501, to be recited by the Scottish envoys at the court of Henry VII.

Dunbar undoubtedly owed much to Chaucer, whom he revered as a master; but to call him a Scots Chaucer is in reality, as we have hinted, to render him a disservice; for he inherited little of Chaucer's special endowment, and his own best qualities are anything but Chaucerian. He entirely lacks the genial humanity, the indefinable charm, the width of view, and the sustained inspiration of the English maker. Chaucer's dramatic talent, and still more his reflective power, find no counterpart among the many gifts of Dunbar,

who is one of the most self-centred of bards, always brooding over the good fortune of others and the ill-luck of William Dunbar. It is more to the point to compare him with his greater descendant, Robert Burns—the Burns of saturnine humour and insight, who wrote *The Jolly Beggars* and *Tam o' Shanter*, but a Burns deficient in passion and in pathos, who wrote, not for the people, but for the court, and was much less easily stirred by the sentiment of patriotism.¹

The third member of this Scottish *pléiade* was Gavin or Gavin Douglas, born at Tantallon Castle about 1474, third son of Archibald, Earl of Angus, who figures so prominently in *Marmion* as Bell-the-Cat. After education at St. Andrews and Paris he rose into high office, on the strength of his family interest; was nominated to the See of Dunkeld, and promised the Archbishopric of St. Andrews; but when the Douglas party was overthrown in 1520, Gavin fled to England, and died in exile at the court of Henry VIII. in September, 1522.

Douglas's chief work was his translation of the *Æneid* of Virgil, completed on July 22nd, 1513.

The obvious faults of his version are many. He frequently expands one line into six or more, and is almost always very diffuse. He deliberately paraphrases and transforms the text—as, for instance, where he makes the sibyl in the sixth book a nun. His diction, moreover, is much more archaic even than that of Dunbar, and he makes up a number of new words from the Latin. With all its faults, however, it was largely imitated by Surrey and other translators. The best poetry is in the independent prologues. These are free creations, descriptions of Scots landscape, not wholly unconventional or free from the missal-picture style of ornamentation, yet frequently rising above this to a sincerely felt

¹ The metrical side of Dunbar has been studied not only by Prof. Schipper (now of Vienna), but also by H. B. Baidon in *On the Rimes in the Authentic Poems of Dunbar* (1899). Eight of Dunbar's poems were printed by Chepman & Myllar at Edinburgh in 1508. A mutilated copy of this unique book is in the Advocates' Library. The *Poems* were printed by Pinkerton in his *Ancient Scottish Poems* (vol. i., 1786), and were collected, with a brief memoir, by J. Paterson (Edinburgh, 1860). They were first adequately edited, with a memoir and notes, by David Laing* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1834-5), with supplement, 1866. The best edition now, however, is that of the Scottish Text Society (in 2 vols.), edited by J. Small, to which an excellent study by Sheriff Æneas Mackay is prefixed in a separate volume (1899). There are selections of Dunbar, with modernised spelling, by G. Eyre Todd, in *Mediæval Scottish Poetry* (vol. ii., 1892), and by Hugh Haliburton (adapted to present-day Lowland Scots), 1895. Some of the best poems are well modernised in H. M. Fitzgibbon's *Early English Poetry* (1887). There is a first-rate article on Dunbar in *Blackwood* (February, 1835), and a slighter one by F. R. Oliphant in the same magazine September, 1893).

interpretation of the moods and harmonies of Nature. His *Winter Peece*, his *May Day*, his *Welcum to the Lamp of Day* are still good to gladden the heart.¹

The fourth poet in this remarkable group is Sir David Lyndsay. Born about 1490 at Monimail, Fifeshire, he was educated at St. Andrews, and became the companion, play-fellow, and whipping-boy of the brilliant James V. In 1529 he was knighted and made Lyon King of Arms, or chief of the Scots heralds. He went on several embassies, sat in the Scots Parliament for Cupar, and died at Monimail early in 1555.

A satirist keen and racy—rude in every sense of the word—Lyndsay was highly popular with his fellow-countrymen. Repeated editions came out between 1558 and 1776; and of anything not worth saying, "Ye'll no find that in Davie Lyndsay" became proverbial.

Still is thy name in high account
And still thy verse has charms,
Sir David Lindsay of the Mount,
Lord Lion King-at-Arms.

His caustic censure lashed the monks and friars as freely as Butler scorched the pseudo-saints in *Hudibras* or Burns the Ower Gude in *Holy Willie*. He lays his grasp

upon the bridle-rein of the sleek prelate and upbraids him with his secret sins in words ill-fitted for modern ears. Nor does he spare the King and his advisers, or the meanness of the merchant class, or the extravagance of court ladies, whose long skirts he devotes a lay to ridiculing. His breadth and licence are those of a chartered libertine. Nor can he have failed to smooth the way for the reformers, though he avoided a direct breach with the Roman Church. Ecclesiastical corruption was rife, and he probed it shrewdly. Many a man has been burnt for less; for though he did not attack theological mysteries and said nothing of the Mass, his demands squared well with those of the early Protestant martyrs. He insisted on the use of the vulgar tongue in the Liturgy, protested against the mumbling of prayers in half-understood Latin,² and jeered in the freest manner at pilgrimages, processions, relics, and pardons; yet he managed to avoid the semblance of cutting deeply by an affectation of grotesque clownage which disarmed a serious resentment. The very indecencies of his humour would have made a solemn prosecution for heresy seem ludicrous; and there is little doubt that, as with Rabelais, the expedient of indecorum was deliberately adopted to embarrass clerical interference.³

¹ *The XIII Bukes of Eneados, translated into Scotch Metir*, was printed in 1553 (4to), and carefully reprinted by the Bannatyne Club in 1839. Select works of Douglas were printed by Pinkerton in *Ancient Scottish Poems* (1786), and separately at Perth in the following year; again together with Dunbar by J. Sibbald in his *Chronicle of Scottish Poetry* (1802). The best edition of to-day, with memoir, notes, and glossary, is that by J. Small (4 vols., Edinburgh, 1874); but a full critical edition of Douglas is still a desideratum.

² In *Kittie's Confession* a demure-looking curate confesses (and would have kissed) a personable wench:

"Said he, have ye na wrongous gear?
Said she, I stole a peck of beir.
Said he, that should restored be,
Therefore, deliver it to me! . . .
And mekil Latyne did he mummill—
I heard nothing but hummil bummill."

Such dramatic scenes as this, and several in *The Satire of the Three Estates*, serve to justify the description of Lyndsay as a rude Scots Aristophanes.

³ A full bibliography of Lyndsay's works, with facsimiles of the title-pages of the chief editions, is given in David Laing's *Complete Edition* (Edinburgh, 1871). For the four Scots poets dealt with in this chapter, see T. F. Henderson's studious monograph on *Scottish Vernacular Literature* (1898).

CHAPTER V

EARLY TUDOR POETRY

"In Henry VIII.'s reign sprang up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder, and Henry, Earle of Surrey, were the two chieftains."—PUTTENHAM, *Arte of English Poesie*.

"That Time's best makers and the authors were
Of those small poems which the title bear
Of songs and sonnets."—DRAYTON.

Stephen Hawes—Alexander Barclay—John Skelton—His pictures of low life—Skeltonic verse—Sir Thomas Wyatt—His metrical innovations—Earl of Surrey—His use of decasyllabic blank verse.

THE early Tudor kings, Henry VII. and Henry VIII., imported their court painters, Mabuse and Holbein, from abroad. It seems a pity that they could not have imported, say from Scotland, their court poets; for of the tribe of courtly makers Stephen Hawes and John Skelton can scarcely be described as brilliant representatives.

An Oxford man of reputed Suffolk origin, Hawes was commended to Henry VII. as a scholar formed by travel, a complete gentleman, and a master of languages. His chief poem, *The Passetyme of Pleasure*, was written about 1505-6, and printed by Wynkyn de Worde about 1512. In form it is one of the old-fashioned allegories; through Hawes, in fact, mediæval allegory sang its last courtly note—a swan-song of which one note at any rate still vibrates in the couplet:

For though the day be never so long,
At last the belles ringeth to evensong.

During the last years of Henry VII., Alex-

ander Barclay, a Scot by descent, though apparently a native of the South of England, possibly Croydon, was writing a book which made almost as great a stir in its own day as *Gulliver's Travels* did in that of the first George; this was a version, or rather paraphrase, of Sebastian Brandt's *Narrenschiff* (or *Ship of Fools*), printed by Pynson in December, 1509. The bulk of Barclay's version, constituting a ponderous and extravagantly didactic satire, was thrown into the form of the Chaucerian stanza, but parts are linked together by passages in prose, while the metre is occasionally varied.¹ Homely in style, Barclay was fairly harmonious in manner, and there was enough pith in him to make his work long popular. *The Ship of Fools* suggested the machinery of that formidable satire of Henry VIII.'s reign called *The Bowge of Court*, by John Skelton, laureate, the whip of Wolsey, and the father of English doggerel,—“beastly Skelton,” as Pope calls him.²

¹ *This Present Boke, named the Shyp of Follys* . . . (printed by Pynson, December, 1509, folio). A modern edition, with some account of Barclay, appeared in 1874 (London, 4to), and a notice of Barclay's Life and Writings, by T. H. Jamieson, in the same year. See, too, Herford's *German Influence on English Literature in Sixteenth Century*.

² *Bowge* (Bouche) of Court signifies the King's Table; the name is given to an ornate vessel in which Skelton embarks in quest of the purchasable commodity, court favour. Skelton's anarchical versification, known as Skeltonic or Skeltonical, has often been imitated; he may have caught the lilt of it himself from the tavern harpers of his day. Echoes of his pungent rhymes and playful word coinage may be found in Butler, Swift, Peter Pindar, Southey, Thackeray (*Peg o' Limavaddy*), but the velocity of his verse has seldom been equalled. Skelton handed on to Spenser the name of *Colin Clout* for a religious satirist or reformer. The resentment of his enemies encompassed him about, and it was in an asylum that he died on June 21st, 1529 (buried in chancel of St. Margaret's, Westminster). *The Poetical Works of Skelton* were edited in two volumes by A. Dyce (London, 1843, 8vo), and a new *Selection*, containing *The Bowge*, *Phyllip Sparowe*, *Colin Cloute*, and *Why come ye not to Court?* (ed. W. H. Williams), appeared in 1902. A fresh edition (which is a desideratum) is understood to be in contemplation by A. F. Pollard for the Clarendon Press.

Skelton's elegy on the Sparrow is a *tour de force* of a kind rare in any literature; yet it seems characteristically English. When Catullus bewailed the death of Lesbia's bird, he confined himself to eighteen truly exquisite lines; but "ragged, tatter'd and jagged" Skelton, while lamenting the Sparrow that was "slain at Carowe," has engrafted on the subject so many far-sought and whimsical embellishments that his episode is really what the old editions term it—a "boke."

The whole poem is an extraordinary arabesque, in which wit, pedantry, imagination, and burlesque are strangely intermingled. Nursery rhymes, strongly suggestive of the death and burial of Cock Robin, are blended with Macaronic verses full of irony and mischief, and not seldom indecency. Skelton's wayward rhymes, which are well termed "breathless" (so much breath do they require in reading them aloud), are often miracles of skill; and similarly his verse, from its volume and volubility, is well compared to the ribands out of a conjurer's mouth at a fair. Skelton imitates low life with the coarse relish of a Dutch painter, while as a master of the repulsive he challenges Swift and Hogarth.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, born at Allington Castle in Kent, in 1503, was the son of Sir Henry Wyatt, a strong Lancastrian, and faithful adherent to the House of Tudor. He took his degree at Cambridge (St. John's), at the age of seventeen. His distinguished bearing and appearance aided his progress at the Court of Henry VIII. We soon find him travelling abroad on diplomatic missions, and in 1530 he was High Marshal at Calais. He knew Anne Boleyn well, and is said to have warned Henry VIII. against her light character, having had cause himself, many believed, to rue that same levity. He was sent to the Tower upon her fall, but was very soon released.¹

¹ The career of Anne Boleyn is still shrouded in much mystery. It is probable that Wyatt long cherished a secret affection for her. They were children together, and Anne wrote to him from Paris in 1515 as "your loving little Nan." She is certainly the "Anna" of several poems, and the platonic attachment between the two must have been alluded to in the lines:

"Forget not—oh! forget not this,
How long ago hath been and is
The love that never meant amiss,
Forget not yet."

² Of the various editions of Wyatt's works appearing since that day, by far the most important is the one edited by Dr. G. F. Nott (Surrey and Wyatt, in 2 vols., 1815-16). The text given here differs materially from that found in the *Miscellany*, for it is based upon Wyatt manuscripts discovered by Nott, and the number of poems is also considerably augmented. The Aldine edition of 1866, with a memoir by T. W[right], has a good reproduction of Holbein's portrait.

He went as envoy to the Emperor Charles V. in 1537, and was sent to Flanders again in 1540. Wyatt's official correspondence shows him to have been a man of quick observation and an excellent writer. The penetration which he showed into the Emperor's character was remarkable. After Cromwell's fall, however, in June, 1540, Wyatt's enemies, particularly Bishop Bonner, procured his imprisonment; he was arrested and sent to the Tower on a charge of having defamed the King, and having conspired with Reginald Pole against him. After an eloquent defence Wyatt was acquitted and restored to favour in the summer of 1541. He spent most of the next year in retirement, but he died from a chill caught on the hurried journey to Falmouth to receive the Emperor's ambassador in the autumn of 1542. He was buried at Sherborne on October 11th. His poems ran only at court until, in 1557, a shrewd stationer, one Richard Tottel, collected them and the MS. poems of rival courtiers (271 in all) into the volume of *Songes and Sonnettes*, dear to the heart of Master Slender.²

Two very marked and contrary features distinguished Wyatt's poetry—the individual energy of his thought, and his persistent imitation of foreign models. The former is what separates him sharply from the poets of the Middle Ages. Hitherto, with the exception of *The Canterbury Tales*, almost every English poem of importance had been didactic in intention, thereby denoting its clerical source, and symbolical in form, thus revealing the influence of the allegorical method of interpreting Nature and Scripture encouraged in the Church schools. Wyatt, on the other hand, looked at Nature through his own eyes, and sought to express directly the feelings of his own heart. He was a man of many moods and ideas; his compositions include love verses, epigrams, devotional meditations, satires, and

in all of these the force and ardour of his thought is sensibly felt. But equally in all of them the poet shows himself to be aware of the imperfection of his native language as an instrument of expression, and submits himself with humility to the superiority of the foreign masters whose manner he seeks to reproduce.

As a metrical innovator Wyatt is specially to be remembered for his attempt to Anglicise the Italian sonnet. The sonnet form was probably originally cultivated in Provence, but as a vehicle of poetical expression it was perfected and its form arbitrarily fixed by Petrarch, who stands for the sonnet in European literature much as Milton stands for blank verse and La Fontaine for fables. Ordinarily Petrarch wrote two kinds of sonnets; they closely resemble each other, and may be called normal types. The Petrarchan sonnet consists of fourteen decasyllabic lines, and is divided into two parts:

(1) The octave of two quatrains, often called the bases of the sonnet. This octave must only have two rhymes, but these two rhymes must be well varied; the eight lines of the octave should also end upon a full-stop or point.

(2) The sestet of six lines, which may have two or three rhymes variously arranged, but always in such a manner as to avoid the formation of a rhyming couplet in the last two lines.

As regards theme, the sonnet must be self-contained and homogeneous. Ordinarily speaking, the first eight lines give a broad exposition of the motive, and the last six a special application of it. In the first eight lines the thought ascends to a climax; in the last six the idea descends to a conclusion.

Nevertheless, by inborn faculty, Wyatt excelled rather in worth of poetic matter than in elegance of form or diction. His best poems are not imitations, but lyrics written for the accompaniment of the lute in simple metrical forms. His best innovation was not the introduction of Italian measures, but the revival of that lyrical mood which had produced some charming snatches of English verse in the thirteenth century, and had then almost entirely died away, Chaucer himself having but a faint touch of it.

The Earl of Surrey was to some extent a disciple of Wyatt, though his poems have none of the vehement individuality and character which distinguish the style of his predecessor.

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, was great-grandson of that Duke of Norfolk ("Dickon of Norfolk") who fell in the cause of Richard III. at Bosworth Field. Neither the place nor the exact date of his birth can be settled with precision; but Kenning Hall, in Norfolk, is suggested by his indefatigable biographer, Dr. Nott, as the most probable birthplace, and the year 1516 as the date for his birth best coinciding with the known facts of his career. Surrey was carefully educated, studying classical and modern (Italian) literature, and trying his hand at verse from boyish years. The antiquary Leland was his brother's tutor, and may also have instructed him. He was placed in the court at the early age of nine as cup-bearer to Henry VIII., and from the age of fifteen he was about that monarch's person. The spirit of poetry was not long in manifesting itself in him, and he associated it, as is familiar to many who have never read a line of his poems, with the lady of the illustrious House of FitzGerald, Earls of Kildare, and since Dukes of Leinster. Dr. Nott pointed out, as detracting somewhat from the romance, that the "fair Geraldine" was but a child of six years when the youthful and chivalrous poet adopted her as his "ladie," and celebrated her beauty and virtue in one of the loveliest of our early sonnets.

In April, 1545, Surrey was recalled from his command in France through the intrigues of the Earl of Hertford (afterwards Protector Somerset). The exposure of Katherine Howard and the ignominy which attached to that connection no doubt rendered Henry exceptionally ready to listen to anything to the discredit of her relatives, and many stories of Surrey's rashness and impulsive nature were current. Both Surrey and his father were on bad terms with Hertford, whom they disliked and despised as the representative of the new nobility, and whom they sought to supplant in the confidence of the King. In August, 1546, Hertford and his friends trumped up a charge against Surrey of quartering the royal arms upon his shield, and of aspiring to the succession upon Henry's death. Henry was genuinely afraid that Surrey's headstrong nature might lead him to dispute the succession of a boy of ten, and attempt to smash the windows, not of London citizens, but of the Tudor dynasty. Surrey was found guilty on January 15th, 1547, and a week later was brought to the block on

Tower Hill. His remains, after interment at Barking All Saints', were eventually deposited at Framlingham.¹

As far as regards the subject-matter of his poetry, Surrey must be regarded as the follower of Wyatt. Almost all his poems deal with the subject of love, the fair Geraldine taking the place of the dark-eyed Anna of his predecessor. Ninety-six of his love poems to forty of Wyatt's were included in *Tottel's Miscellany* of June, 1557. Some of these are irregular sonnets (a great improvement upon those of Wyatt in form of construction, though not based upon the Petrarchan model); others, *canzoni* composed either in *terza rima* or in long verses of twelve and fourteen syllables; others, again, in the form of short lyrics.

Perhaps the most important of Surrey's achievements as poetical inventor (and he did much to form the prosody and reform the diction of his day) was the distinction of having been the first to make use in English of decasyllabic blank verse. This he did with daring originality in his translation of two favourite books in Virgil's *Æneid*—the second with the account of the downfall of Troy, and the fourth

containing the Dido episode. In his phraseology and diction Surrey was indebted to Gavin Douglas, and in regard to the innovation of blank verse there is little doubt that the novelty was suggested by the translation of these same two books of the *Æneid* by Francesco Maria Molza, published at Venice in 1541. Surrey's *Æneid* was published after his death in 1557. The selection of heroic verse for the translation was only a natural one, but in making it Surrey was the first Englishman to take the successful venture of employing the verses in simple succession without any connecting rhymes. His Italian predecessor had set him an example in this, and even if Surrey knew not Molza he could not have been unaware of other Italian endeavours of a similar kind, whether in the form of drama or in elegies. He certainly applied the new principle with skill, and showed considerable power over the new instrument by varying the place assigned to the rhythmical pause. It was not, however, until many years later, in the hands of Christopher Marlowe, that the potentialities of this new species of verse could be thoroughly appreciated.

¹ In addition to Dr. Nott and the authorities cited for Wyatt, the reader must refer to Ed. Bapst's *Deux Gentils-hommes Poètes* (1891), and to Schipper and J. B. Mayor on Surrey's metres. Certain *Bokes of Virgiles Ænais*, turned into English meter by the right honourable lorde, Henry Earle of Surrey, were printed in black-letter by Richard Tottel, Fleet Street, June, 1557.

CHAPTER VI

EARLY TUDOR PROSE

"Libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festinus."

Lord Berners' Froissart—Fabyan's *New Chronicles*—Richard Grafton—John Leland—Andrew Boorde—George Cavendish—Grocyn and Linacre—John Colet—Sir John Cheke—Roger Ascham—*The Scholemaster*—Latimer—Sir Thomas Elyot—Sir Thomas More—*Utopia*—Its influence in literature.

OF the chief prose writers during the two reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., covering a period of over sixty years, it is proposed to give a classified rather than a chronological survey. Hitherto English prose had been strictly limited in kind. There were, of course, chronicles and letters, translations and treatises. Annals, theology, and law had engrossed by far the greater part of the activity of English prose writers. Only a few years before the crowning mercy of Bosworth (1485) Malory had adapted prose to the purpose of highly imaginative narrative, and it was soon to be bent to other fresh uses. New forms of literature are now rising, and they are associated everywhere with the battle of opinion which, like the first movement of sap in plants, is a first condition of health, growth, and fruit-bearing. The example of the Italian courts had strengthened the faith of king and courtiers in the skilled use of the pen. Henry VIII. among his courtly makers attacked Luther in a treatise, and composed some tunable songs. He was soon to defy the Pope of Rome, like Shakespeare's King John, and to make himself Pope of England, to the exceeding great joy of the Lollard remnant, and of the much greater section of the community who either hated or coveted, as the case might be, the power and the wealth of Rome.

Commencing in the old paths of chronicle and translation we pass on to the outpourings of our first really great English antiquary, John Leland; the early English eccentric and merry-andrew, Boorde; and our first distinctive and individual biographer, George Cavendish. The great humanistic movement was now beginning effectually to quicken English

thought, especially through the influence of the universities. Linacre and Grocyn, Colet and Erasmus, lead us to More, Elyot, and Ascham. But the Renaissance in England soon becomes merged in the Reformation, of which we have a noble representative in Latimer, although for the most fundamental work of our English reformers in the evolution of the English Scriptures, the liturgy, and other formularies of Protestant doctrine, we must refer our readers to a special chapter a little later on.

The chief work of Lord Berners (c. 1467—1533), his famous translation of Froissart, was undertaken by the express command of Henry VIII. The first volume was printed by Pynson in 1524, the second in 1525. It may be freely admitted that Berners shows a gentlemanly indifference to pedantic niceties of style, whether French or English. He makes no pretence to superior qualifications for the work. In the preface to the Froissart he speaks of his "rude translation"; and elsewhere he speaks of his lack of facility in English, and his incomplete study of French. This unpretentiousness had one capital result; the translator attempts no soaring flights, but keeps his nose down close to the phrasing of his original. When his author is clear, Berners is comparatively lucid, but when there are hard words or difficult constructions he is apt to become confused. The difficulty is often due to the printed text of the French, which was not derived from the best manuscripts and is full of corruptions; yet he is frequently very careless both in translating his French and in constructing his English, while instead of correcting the English proper names, of which

the French-speaking Froissart had made a most admired havoc, he frequently makes matters worse by incorrect transcription. With all his faults, however, Berners, with his unformed fifteenth-century English, probably represents the spirit of the original better than any accurate version in modern prose could do. There is a vigorous picturesqueness about his phrase, and a vitality about the utterances of his personages, for the loss of which no amount of grammatical concord with the original could possibly atone. He has, too, this unique advantage—that he was born within seventy years of the death of Richard II., the event with which his translation terminates. His diction is, on this account, not too far removed from the time of his author, or from the famous acts and glorious deeds in which the ancestors of the translator and his readers alike had borne their share.

“It is well to read Froissart,” writes Taine to his sister, “but do not seek facts there. Simply remark and make a note of the picture of manners. For the rest, read it like a romance. You can read Rollin in the same way, but that will profit you less.” In reading Froissart, nevertheless, we are reading the history of the fourteenth century, breathing the spirit and the very air of that age of infinite variety, in which the knight-errant appears side by side with the plundering adventurer, while popular uprisings sound the first note of alarm to feudal oppressors, and the schism of the papacy leaves an open door to the religious reformer. The *Chronicles* only really cover two reigns in any detail, but these two reigns—of Edward III. and Richard II.—make up the greater part of the fourteenth century. The chief landmarks of the book are exploits of war—Sluys, Crécy, Calais, Poitiers, Najara, Limoges, Wat Tyler's Revolt, Rosebeque, and Otterburn—concluding with the coronation of Henry IV. The whole forms a great pageant of court and camp, of barons, captains, archers, sieges, and fierce “journeys,” or noble adventures of feats of arms. As we read it, we seem to be unrolling a length of ancient tapestry, displaying an animated crowd of knights and ladies with a background of castles, tilts and tournaments, unfaded in colour, harmonious in grouping, yet

presenting to the eye no regular or uniform picture.

From the glittering pages of Froissart as rendered by Lord Berners one turns sadly to the tedious homespun of our native chroniclers such as Fabyan and Hall, representatives of English history under Henry VII. and Henry VIII.

Fabyan's *New Chronicles of England and France*, the concordance of histories, was printed by Pynson in 1516 in two parts: Part I., from the mythical Brut of Geoffrey of Monmouth to Henry II.; Part II., from Richard I. down to the accession of Henry VII. Successive continuations carried the work down to the enthronement of Elizabeth. Each year is dealt with separately under the heading of its Lord Mayor, and much space is devoted to the London Corporation and to the details of blood-curdling executions. More attractive, perhaps, is the so-called chronicle of Edward Hall, another Londoner, who studied at Eton, Cambridge, and Gray's Inn, became a common serjeant, and died in 1547. The character of Hall's book is shown in its title: *The Union of the Noble and Illustre Families of Lancastre and York*, commencing with Henry IV. and ending with Henry VIII.; printed by Berthelot in 1542. Hall's chronicle is a glorification of the House of Tudor and a justification of all the acts of Henry VIII., especially as regards Church matters. Hall is far superior to Fabyan in style, and the limitation of his subject enables him to invest it with considerable dramatic interest. He uses the Latin history of Polydore Vergile to some extent as a groundwork, but for the early years of Henry VIII. he becomes an original authority. Some of his descriptions are very vivid and were closely followed by Shakespeare, in *Richard III.* for instance. Later historians also, such as Grafton, Holinshed, and Stow, borrowed very largely from Hall.

Richard Grafton (died 1572) was an important printer and stationer, who printed the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549. He edited the metrical chronicle of John Hardyng, brought down Hall from 1532 to 1546, and in 1568 brought out a chronicle of his own, entitled *A Chronicle at Large and Mere Historye of the Affayres of England*.¹

¹ The scientific value of these chronicles is not perhaps great, but they mark progress in the history of English prose as a vehicle of narrative. They were all edited and indexed by Sir Henry Ellis between 1809 and 1816. On Berners, see W. P. Ker, *Essays on Medieval Literature*, 1905.

Of greater intrinsic value than these chronicles is the work of our first great (extra-legal) antiquarian scholar, John Leland, who was educated first at St. Paul's School under the celebrated grammarian William Lilly, grandfather of the Euphuist, and then at Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris. Henry VIII., with his undoubted gift in discerning talent, encouraged Leland in every way, making him Chaplain Librarian and King's Antiquary, in addition to according him a special permit to examine the historical records of the country. From 1536 to 1542 Leland travelled all over the kingdom. His tours were as extensive as those of Defoe, but his survey was not so much social and economic as topographical and antiquarian. He visited towns, villages, castles, cathedrals, and monasteries; ransacked libraries for valuable books and records; hunted out coins, inscriptions, and ancient works of art; and even collections in what we should now call folk-lore, in which pursuit his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon and of Welsh stood him in valuable stead. He also made large biographical collections which took shape in four books of British biography entitled *De Viris Illustribus*. Like the contemporary work of Bishop John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Catalogus* (1548-1559), Leland's Lives are disfigured by many avoidable errors and fables, but are noteworthy as being first in a series of efforts leading up to the *Biographia Britannica* and the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Having fulfilled the tasks of both the Nepos and Varro of his age, poor Leland died insane in 1552, and his greatest work, the *Itinerary through most Parts of England and Wales*, was not printed until 1710, when it was taken up by the great Oxford antiquary, Thomas Hearne.¹

While we are on the subject of the topographers and biographers of Henry VIII.'s generation we must not altogether omit mention of Andrew Boorde (1490—1549), who punned his name into "Perforatus," a fantastic proto-

type of Tom Coryate; or of George Cavendish, author of a well-known *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*. Boorde travelled in Europe from Sicily and Spain to Denmark, partly as a political agent of Thomas Cromwell. His most important journey, however, was a purely recreative ramble by Antwerp, Cologne, Venice, and Rhodes to Jerusalem, and back by Naples, Rome, and the Alps. He wrote an *Itinerary of Europe*, which has unfortunately perished; but he has left a *Book of the Introduction of Knowledge*² which is, in effect, a kind of handy guide to European travel.

As a corrective to the coarse lampoons of Skelton it is desirable for the student of the period to read the pious *Life of Cardinal Wolsey*, written about 1557 by the great prelate's gentleman usher, George Cavendish (1500—1562). A devout Conservative and Catholic, Cavendish wrote in an old-fashioned style, with something of the archaic diction of an ancient chronicle. As a record of unwavering fidelity, entirely free from pretension or artifice, his book has an attraction and a literary grace of its own, apart from its critical or artistic merits, which are small. It is the production of a refined, pious, and gentle nature, which looks over many years of quiet melancholy upon a period when he, too, had borne a part in great affairs. The story of Wolsey's death is memorable for the use which seems to have been made of it in the great Elizabethan pageant play of *Henry VIII.* If Shakespeare or Fletcher saw it at all, they must have seen it in MS.³

The early part of the reign of Henry VIII. was honourably distinguished by the great encouragement given to humane letters, and especially to the teaching of Greek at Oxford and Cambridge.⁴ Before the end of the fifteenth century William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre brought back from Italy both knowledge of and enthusiasm for the newly found authors of antiquity. They established the study of Greek at Oxford, where they were soon followed by John Colet, who became

¹ Leland's MSS. had, however, been preserved in the Bodleian and Cotton Libraries, and their riches were largely drawn upon by such famous antiquaries as Camden, Drayton, Stow, Burton, Dugdale, and Wood.

² Boorde's *Introduction* and *Dietary* were edited by Dr. Furnivall for the Early English Text Society in 1870.

³ Cavendish's book was extensively circulated in manuscript long before it was printed. It was published in a garbled form in 1641; first separately edited from the author's autograph MS. by S. W. Singer in 1815; reissued with an introduction by Prof. H. Morley in 1885; and beautifully printed with original spelling by William Morris, Hammersmith, March, 1893. Cavendish's book is well described in *Retrospective Review*, v. 1-44.

⁴ For the rise of the New Learning, more especially at Oxford, and in connection with Colet, Erasmus, and More, see Frederic Seebohm's delightful *Oxford Reformers*, 1867, 3rd ed. 1887.

Dean of St. Paul's, the founder of the Cathedral School there, and the friend of Erasmus and More. Cambridge followed a little later, and the great Erasmus lectured there in Greek for a short time. After him came Sir John Cheke (d. 1557), who became Provost of King's College, Cambridge, and is remembered as "the professor who taught Cambridge and King Edward Greek." Of the pronunciation of that language, moreover, he set up the standard which has ever since prevailed in England. Cheke produced a number of learned and controversial works in Latin. His most notable work in English was a pamphlet, published in 1549, under the title of *The Hurt of Sedition*, a somewhat uncritical denunciation of the agrarian rising in Norfolk under Robert Ket. Cheke in turn was followed at Cambridge by his more brilliant pupil, Roger Ascham.

Roger Ascham was born near Northallerton in 1515. His father was house steward in the family of Lord Scrope. He himself was placed in the family of Sir Anthony Wingfield, under whose patronage he entered St. John's College, Cambridge. At Cambridge Ascham joined the progressive party in education, and applied himself diligently to the study of Greek. He was made a fellow of his college, gathered many pupils about him, and was, in 1538, appointed Greek reader at St. John's. Besides his proficiency in Greek, Ascham was distinguished for the purity of his Latin epistles and for his beautiful handwriting. Many of his scholars rose to great eminence, and among them William Grindal was so much distinguished that, by Cheke's recommendation, Ascham was called to court as a proper master of languages for the Lady Elizabeth. In defence of his pastime, archery, and to show how well he could handle Platonic dialogue, he wrote and dedicated to Henry VIII. in 1545 the masterly little treatise called *Toxophilus*. For this treatise, long regarded as a model of prose style, Ascham received a yearly pension of £10 from the King. He was also chosen orator to the University of Cambridge in the place of Sir John Cheke.

In 1563 Ascham was invited by Sir Edward Sackville to write *The Scholemaster*, a treatise on education. The book sprang out of a conver-

sation after a dinner in Sir William Cecil's chamber at Windsor. A number of scholars at Eton had run away from the school for fear of beating, and the question arose whether it were better to make the school a house of pleasure or a house of pain. Ascham, as the model pupil of a model teacher, Sir John Cheke, was appealed to by Sackville to decide the issue. The book, commenced with so much alacrity, in the hope no doubt of a considerable reward, was interrupted by the death of the patron, and afterwards sorrowfully and slowly finished in the gloom of disappointment under the pressure of distress. But of the author's disinclination or dejection there can be found no tokens in the work, which is conceived with great vigour, and finished with great accuracy, and perhaps contains the best advice that was ever given for the study of languages. The treatise was practically completed, but Ascham did not live to publish it. He died of a wasting illness on December 30th, 1568. The printers showed no eagerness to print the book, which lay unseen in his study, but was eventually dedicated by his widow, Margaret Ascham, to Sir William Cecil in 1570. Of Ascham's other English works there remains to mention *A Report and Discourse of the Affairs and State of Germany*, an interesting contemporary account of European politics during the critical time of the struggle between Charles V. and Maurice of Saxony.¹

Another advocate of the long-bow, who wrote his native tongue with a racier idiom and a homelier strength than Ascham, was Hugh Latimer, the son of a Leicestershire yeoman whose armour the boy had buckled on in Henry VII.'s reign during the Cornish rebellion. Born at Thurcaston about 1486, Latimer threw himself into the cause of New Learning at Cambridge with a zeal fully equal to that of Ascham, but he was destined to be known not as a scholar, but as a preacher. He is well represented in two volumes of Prof. Arber's invaluable reprints—*Seven Sermons* and *The Ploughers*. The description of his father's house and of the England of his youth is well and deservedly known. He had a plain, shrewd style and a command of graphic detail that ranks him with Bunyan, Defoe, and "Poor

¹ The whole works of Roger Ascham were edited by Dr. J. A. Giles, 3 vols., 1865. *Toxophilus* and *The Scholemaster* have both been reprinted by Prof. Arber, of Ascham by Hartley Coleridge, 1873 and 1884. There is an agreeable article on the *Toxophilus* in *Retrospective Review*, iv. 76-87.

Richard." He had an exceptional gift for the jocose. His sermons were full of happy instances and "merry toys," such as the story of the white-bearded old man of Kent, who asserted that the building of Tenterden steeple was the cause of the Goodwin Sands, *because* before it was built the Goodwin Sands gave no trouble to Sandwich Haven. He was also a master of taunts and fleers. At the trial just before his death he mocked the Bishop of Gloucester in such wise that the court roared with laughter. He had little turn for speculation, but intense moral earnestness, backed up by no small store of irony and invective. "His homely humour breaks in with story and apologue; his earnestness is always tempered with good sense; his plain and simple style quickens with a shrewd mother wit. He talks to his hearers as a man talks to his friends, telling stories of his life at home as a boy, or chatting about the changes and chances of the day with a transparent simplicity and truth that raises even his chat into grandeur. His theme is always the actual world about him, and in his simple lessons of loyalty, of industry, of pity for the poor, he touches upon almost every subject from the plough to the throne. No such preaching had been heard in England before his day, and with the growth of his fame grew the danger of persecution." Latimer was protected by Henry VIII., and his Lutheran sympathies allowed full sway down to 1540, when the reaction set in. He was then imprisoned and forced to resign his See of Worcester. Under Edward VI. he was, of course, a powerful influence, but on Mary's accession he was promptly sent to the Tower as an extreme Protestant. His rough jeers at the supposed miraculous images of the Virgin rendered him obnoxious to the Catholics. When charged with heresy at Oxford in October, 1555, Latimer firmly refused to recant and appealed to a general council. On

October 16th he and his junior, Bishop Ridley, were handed over to the secular arm for execution in the ditch over against Balliol College, Oxford (nigh where the Martyrs' Memorial now stands).¹

Another of the early masters of English prose, who deserves a place between Ascham and More, more, perhaps, on account of his versatility than on any distinctive merit of style, is Sir Thomas Elyot (d. 1546), himself a diplomatist and the son of an eminent judge. As a scholar and a humanist he owed much to More, at whose house he was a frequent visitor. His most famous book was an ethical and educational treatise dedicated to Henry VIII. in 1531, and styled *The Boke named the Governour*. Full of borrowed wisdom as it was, it proved eminently adapted to the wants of the age, and passed through numerous editions. Its primary object was to discuss the education and training of those who might one day be called upon to fill leading positions in the commonwealth. To many readers, however, it must be admitted that the chief interest of *The Governour*,² with all its merits, will always lie in the fact that it is the original authority for the delightful story of the righteous judge Gascoigne and the insubordinate Prince Hal. Elyot passed the story on to Hall, from whose chronicle Shakespeare derived it. Elyot borrows many other notable instances from the Bible, from the fathers, from classic antiquity, and from English history, both in *The Governour* and in his subsequent works, such as *The Castle of Health*, *The Banquet of Sapience*, 1534, *The Image of Governance*, 1540, and *The Defense of Good Women*, 1545. In 1538, with the aid of a loan of books from the King, he compiled a Latin-English dictionary called *Bibliotheca*, which far surpassed anything of the kind that had hitherto appeared in England—the old *Promptuarium Parvulorum*, for instance, first

¹ Separate sermons by Latimer were printed during his lifetime; twenty-seven were issued in 1562, 4to. Some of the best were selected by Leigh Richmond in his *Fathers of the English Church*, 1807, vol. ii.; they were issued in a more complete form by the Parker Society, 1844-5, 2 vols., edited by George Elwes Corrie. There is a strong and moving account of Latimer in Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and there are Lives by Gilpin (1755), and by Demaus, revised edition, 1881. The accounts of Latimer in Burnet's *Reformation* and Froude's *History*, Tulloch's *Leaders of the Reformation*, and in *Blackwood*, vol. lxi., should also be read. There is a modern Life in the Leaders of Religion Series, by R. M. and A. J. Carlyle, 1899.

² A very complete reissue of *The Governour* was edited by Henry Herbert Stephen Croft, from the first edition of 1531, in 2 vols., 1880. The edition contains a full Life and an elaborate glossary. For a very detailed examination of the credibility of the Prince Hal story, which Mr. Croft regards as originally a monastic legend, see vol. ii. 60-71. As a translator Elyot followed Barclay, Skelton, and N. Udall. The noted French Grammar of John Palsgrave first appeared in 1530.

printed by Pynson in 1499. This great lexicon was remodelled by Bishop Thomas Cooper, and published in 1550 under the title of *Thesaurus*.

Sir Thomas More, a son of a justice of the King's Bench, was born in Milk Street, London, on February 7th, 1478, and as a boy was sent as a page to the household of Archbishop Morton, by whom he was sent to Oxford. Morton, it is said, often remarked to his guests upon the genius which he perceived to be latent in the youthful page. He began his legal career under brilliant auspices, and his prospects were greatly improved by the accession of Henry VIII. He was made Master of Requests in 1514; was appointed successively Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Speaker of the House of Commons; was sent on diplomatic errands to France and Germany, and in 1529, on the fall of Wolsey, against his own wish was made Lord Chancellor. Both as a man and as a lawyer More was strongly conservative by temperament. He was very bitter in his denunciation of advanced religious opinions, especially those of what he called the pestilential sect of Tyndal and Luther, and he had little pity for stubborn heretics. He naturally witnessed with grave disapproval the course of events which were eventually to turn the Defensor Fidei into the head of a schismatic Church. In May, 1532, he sought and obtained permission to resign the chancellorship. He retired to his house at Chelsea, and devoted himself to his family and their studies. When, however, in April, 1533, he was called upon to subscribe upon oath to the Act of Succession, involving his acquiescence in the King's headship of the Church and the royal divorce, he steadfastly refused to sacrifice his conscience to Henry VIII., and after a year's harsh imprisonment in the Tower was beheaded on Tower Hill on July 6th, 1535. John Fisher, himself an impressive preacher and author of two short treatises of genuine beauty, *A Spiritual Consolation* and *The Ways to Perfect Religion*, suffered a like death for a similar cause a fortnight earlier. It was not safe, wrote one scholar to another, to relate how much feeling was moved throughout the whole kingdom by the death of such good men.

Utopia seems to have owed its immediate

origin to an embassy in which More was engaged in 1515, when he was sent by Henry VIII. in company with Cuthbert Tunstall, afterwards Bishop of Durham, to confer with the ambassador of Charles V. on the question of a renewal of alliance. And "since our business did admit of it (says More) I went to Antwerp," where among the many who visited the distinguished Englishman was one whom he describes as more acceptable to himself than any other. This was Peter Giles (*Ægidius*), a man of great humour and good rank in his town, with whom More contracted a close friendship. It was at Antwerp, about November, and probably after many conversations with his new acquaintance, that More wrote the second book of *Utopia*; the first was written later after his return to London early in 1516. In October, 1517, More wrote to Erasmus to say how glad he was that *Ægidius* likes his *Nusquama* (*Utopia*). Erasmus wrote next month to say that the MS. of *Nusquama* was in great request and was about to be placed in the printer's hands. It was accordingly printed at Thierry Martin's Press at Louvain in December, 1516, with the title *Libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festivus de optimo reip. statu de que nova Insula Utopia*. The volume has no pagination. First comes the picture chart of the island of *Utopia*; then the Utopian alphabet, in which A to L are represented by circles or curves, M by a triangle, and N to Y by rectangles or portions of rectangles, dashes being used with them for the sake of further diversity; then a short "meter" of Utopian written by *Ane-molius*, poet laureate—verificatory details worthy of a Defoe or a Swift. The book was received by a chorus of praise. More could only hope that it was all sincere. Erasmus caused all his friends to read it, and wrote to More that a burgomaster at Antwerp was so delighted with the new *Res publica* that he had it all by heart; he suggested that the author might become the ruler of the Utopian people. More wrote with delightful humour deprecating the high honour, but adding that should it please Heaven to exalt him to this high dignity, while too high to think of common acquaintances he will still keep a warm corner in his heart for Erasmus and Tunstall.¹

¹ Curiously enough no English version of *Utopia* was published in the lifetime of the writer. The earliest in point of time is that which appeared in 1551 under the title of *A fruteful and pleasaunt worke of the best state in a publike weale and of the new yle called Utopia: written in Latine by Syr Thomas More, knyght, and translated into Englyshe by Ralphe Robynson, Citizen and Goldsmythe of London. Printed by Abraham*

The polity of Utopia was a confederation of free city-states. There were forty-four of these cities in the island, all large (holding at least six thousand families) and well built, and all formed and governed upon one uniform plan. Each had twenty miles of soil round it and assigned to it, and each sent up three of its wisest senators once a year to the chief city, Amaurote (shadowy), to consult about the common concerns. The country outside the towns was devoted to agriculture, and was covered with farmhouses for the husbandmen, which were well contrived and furnished with all things necessary for rural labour. Each country family consisted of no fewer than forty men and women and two bondmen, the good-man and his wife ruling every family, and over thirty families being governed by a special magistrate. After staying two years in the country twenty out of each family were sent back to town and their places taken by twenty townspeople, who came to learn the agricultural arts, which by-and-by they would have to teach to others. During the harvest large numbers of additional hands were despatched from the towns, and the harvest was generally got in in a single day. The centre of the means of communication (which were far in advance of those of the sixteenth century) was the chief city of Amaurote, situated upon the River Anyder, some sixty miles above its mouth. This city was encompassed by a high and thick wall, in which there were many towers and forts, and the streets were made very convenient for all carriages and were well sheltered from the wind. The buildings were good and were so uniform that a whole side of a street looked like one house. The inhabitants were lucky in possessing each of them a large garden in connection with their dwellings, and their doors were so happily constructed that they not only easily opened but also shut of their own accord. There was, however, no property among the Utopians; every man entered freely into any house whatsoever; and at ten years' end they shifted their houses by lot.

The great principle on which the life of the Utopians was based is community of goods. There is no private property; no use of money except as a means of communication with other

nations and for paying mercenaries. They contemned gold, which was "the reproachful badge of unfamed persons." Meals were taken in common, "four in a mess"; the food, plain but ample, being fetched from the common market early in the day by special stewards, with a reservation of the very best for hospitals, one for each ward of the city, outside the walls. Bloodshed of every kind was abhorred by the Utopians, and the hunter was classed with, or even below, the slaughterman, both being the occupations of serfs. They trained themselves in martial exercises, but preferred to get the better of their enemies by payments to mercenaries, by corruption, and even by assassination than by open warfare.

Every able-bodied man was compelled by the laws to work for his livelihood. They were careful, the Utopians, not to wear themselves out with perpetual toil from morning to night. Dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, they appointed six of these for work. Three hours are so devoted before dinner; after that comes a rest of two hours, and then another short spell of three hours brings them to supper-time. At eight o'clock all go to bed, to rise next morning at four. Lectures, music, and honest games fill up the intervals of the day. Owing to the absence of drones, hoarding, and superfluous expense, the amount of labour proved amply sufficient. All over the island they wear the same sort of clothes. Male and female dress varied but little. Fashions never altered, and every family made their own garments. All, both women and men, learned some trade or other. Generally the same trade passed down from father to son, inclination often following descent; but if any man's genius lay another way, he was by adoption translated into a family that dealt in the trade to which he was inclined. Of the religions in Utopia "there be divers kinds"; but as laws and lawyers were rare, so also have they very few priests. These are men of exceeding holiness, and *therefore* "exceeding few." Like the other magistrates of Utopia, they were selected by ballot. The great feature of More's scheme was religious toleration. By one of the oldest laws of Utopia it was decreed that no man should be punished

Vele. A revised edition appeared in 1556, and a third in 1597. All these were in black-letter. Robinson's translation, which, if oftentimes redundant, is still almost always idiomatic and picturesque (recalling in many phrases the Book of Common Prayer of the same date) has been reprinted by T. F. Dibdin, 1808, by Prof. Arber in 1869, also at Morris's Kelmscott Press, 1893, and at the Clarendon Press in 1895. The Latin of More has also been Englished by Bishop Burnet, 1684, by Arthur Cayley in 1808, and others.

for his religion. Every one might be of any religion he pleased, and might use argument to induce others to accept it. This liberty was extended to avowed atheists, though these were judged to be unfit for any public trust. All sects united in public worship, which was so designed that nothing might be seen or heard which should jar with the feelings of any class of worshippers. This broad-minded conception formed a coping-stone to the noble ideal which More had given to the world.

More's conception of the *Utopia* was suggested in part, there is little doubt, by some of his favourite books. Among these we know were Plato's *Republic* and the playful dialogues, especially the *Vera Historia* of Lucian. It seems, further, that More had in his mind the recorded practices of the early Christians and some of the introductory machinery of St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*. It was the first notable example from the pen of an English writer of the type of *voyage imaginaire*. Its popularity abroad procured it a number of imitators. It suggested such speculative treatises as Campanella's *Civitas Solis*, and it may have had some influence upon such playful flights of fancy as Cyrano de Bergerac's *Voyage de la Lune*. It certainly gave a new adjective, *Utopian*, not only to England, but to Europe. English literature itself contains many examples of the *voyage imaginaire*, both of the speculative and of the more purely playful type. Amongst the former may be merely noted Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Harrington's *Oceana*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Sir John Eliot's *Monarchy of Man*, Hall's *Mundus alter et idem*, Filmer's *Patriarcha*, Butler's *Erewhon*, and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*; among the latter Barclay's *Argenis*, Bishop Francis Goodwin's *Man in the Moon*, Bishop John Wilkins's *Discovery of a World in the Moon*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Robert Paltock's *Peter Wilkins*, Raspe's *Baron Munchausen*, Lytton's *Coming Race*, and the numerous fantastic peregrinations of Mr. H. G. Wells.

In regard to dramatic invention, More is superior to any of his successors, with the exception of Swift. In the art of feigning he is a worthy disciple of Plato. Like him, starting from a small portion of fact he founds his tale with admirable skill on the few lines in the Latin narrative of the voyages of Amerigo Vespucci. He is very precise about dates and facts, and has the power of making us believe that the narrator of the tale must have been an eye-witness. More greatly regrets that he forgot to ask Raphael Hythlodaye in what part of the world *Utopia* was situated. When More wrote to his friends at Antwerp to make good the loss of this important detail, the whereabouts of Hythlodaye could no longer be ascertained and the secret has perished with him.¹

The *Utopia* shows its author to have possessed a reach and originality of thought far beyond his contemporaries. Nearly all that we can learn of More is delightful, but baffling. The favourite of Holbein, of Henry and of Erasmus (who wrote his *Encomium Moriae* under More's roof), he is described by his "Erasmiotatos" as *omnibus omnium horarum homo*. A merry story ever on his lips, he was never in gayer humour than when he had decided to defy Henry VIII., unless it was when he was actually on the scaffold. Always smiling (like Newman, like Arnold), he keeps hearers and readers alike under the enigma of his style, and, like his wife, we never quite know when, if ever, he is in earnest; but he wins all hearts, even that of his practical wife, by his playful flattery. Lover of Lucian, patron of Hellenists and musicians, he brings up a family of scholars with the aid of a birch made of peacocks' feathers. Careless and ironical though he is about worldly prosperities, he constantly eulogises his father's sternness and tenacity in such matters; while, in regard to heretics, he himself was pitiless. The antique mould and the mediæval strain render his character an exceptionally puzzling one for the modern man to unravel.²

¹ One of the nearest approaches to the Utopian polity, as pointed out by Sir Clements Markham in his interesting *History of Peru*, was that of Peru under the administration of the Incas.

² The *Workes of Sr Thomas More . . . written in the English Tongue*, were edited in folio by Rastell in 1557 (a new edition is promised by Delcourt and O'Connor). His best prose is contained in the unfinished little tract, *De Quatuor Novissimis*, and in the dialogue entitled "Quoth he and Quoth I." The two contemporary Lives of More are by "son Roper," who married his favourite daughter Margaret, first printed in 1616, and the Life in the *Trees Thomæ* (1588) of Thomas Stapleton. The sketches by Mackintosh and Seeborn and the imaginary picture in Anne Manning's *Household of Sir Thomas More* apart, there are two good Lives by Catholics of to-day, Father Bridgett's (best edition 1892) and Henri Brémond's much briefer *Blessed Thomas More* (1904).

BOOK II
DRAMA AND LYRIC

CHAPTER I

FROM TRANSITION TO TRANSFORMATION.—I

"The advancing man discovers how deep a property he has in literature."—EMERSON.

An important period of development—Italian influence—Classical translations—Arthur Golding—Sir Thomas North—Sir Thomas Hoby—Sir Geoffry Fenton—Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*—George Chapman—Edward Fairfax—Joshua Sylvester—John Florio—Thomas Shelton—Sir Thomas Urquhart.

IN dealing with the important period of transition between the early Tudor and later Tudor period, we must pause. We are in a century of two great reigns. The Wars of the Roses are becoming forgotten. Henry VIII. is King.

The Tudor *régime* continues—in the eighties as in the forties the absolute despotism seems undisturbed, nay even strengthened by the repulse of external enemies. But great changes had taken place quietly and imperceptibly. By 1590 the Tudors had achieved their task. Parliament was reviving and was bracing itself up for a task of its own. The force of circumstance which had delivered Englishmen bound into the hands of tyrants was going to release them. The genius of the race demanded it. So in literature, extraordinary developments had taken place in this interval. External signs had been few and of no sensational order. We shall look in vain during the Protectorates, and during the fifties, sixties, and seventies for any literary planet or for any star of the first magnitude. The literary aptitudes of Englishmen were being undemonstratively schooled and disciplined.

Poetry was acquiring a new quiet force. But it was mainly by forced labours of translation,

and by journey work for the infant stage, that the literary train was laid.

The development that took place in regard to English literature between early Tudor and late Tudor times, in the fifty years let us say between 1529 and 1579, was a most important one. The period may at first sight seem empty and singularly barren. But when we regard it attentively and recognise the change brought about in the view taken of fundamentals, we must admit its claim to serious interest. At the commencement of it Sir Thomas More wrote his *Utopia* in Latin. This is a momentous fact.

Much had already been done to unify the English language. Caxton, like another King Alfred, had made translations into English, and having given vernacular books his imprimatur, had distributed them to serve as patterns of the "King's English" broadcast over the land. The same influence had been used to give a wider circulation to the poetry which had hitherto been mainly a monopoly and a luxury of the court—notably the works of Chaucer and Gower; a little later, the popular collections known as the Poetical Miscellanies. Already the Stationers' Company had grown into a powerful federation successfully interested in extending the dissemination of books.¹

¹ In the reign of Mary, the Privy Council began to perceive and to regard with a jealous eye the far-reaching influence which the new art of printing was capable of exercising upon public opinion; the scribes and booksellers had formed a guild or craft fraternity in Henry IV.'s time. In Henry VII.'s reign, the *Stationers*, as they were called, were reinforced by printers, book-binders, paper-makers, type-founders, and others representing all the trades that took part in the book-producing industry. In May, 1557, the ancient guild was incorporated as a regular company, and a charter was granted to it investing its master and wardens with the sole power of printing, with power to search, seize, and destroy any unlicensed or prohibited books and to imprison any persons who should print without their authority. No one was allowed to print without the company's licence and all books were to be entered in the register at Stationers' Hall. The fee exacted by the company for licensing a book was at first usually 4*d.*, but came in Shakespeare's time to be almost invariably 6*d.* The charter of incorporation was confirmed by Elizabeth in November, 1559, when we gather that there were twenty-two master

Much had assuredly been done, but not enough apparently for More to think it worth while to clothe the ideas of the future in their native garb of English. Much remained to be done, and the consolidation of English as a uniform literary language suitable for every kind of expression by Englishmen had to be established during these unostentatious years. The foundations had to be laid in translations into a sound, homespun, serviceable prose—religious translation was most effectual.

The result of these combined forces of the organisation of the book industry, the multiplication of translations, and the conversion of English into the medium of the popular religion, was greatly to strengthen the position of the native language. So far had these influences been brought to bear by 1579 that More, if he had been in the act of composing *Utopia* then, would not have dreamed of writing it in Latin. By 1579 England, though still looking abroad for inspiration and design, had definitely begun to aspire to a great literature of her own.

The extent of foreign influence upon English literature in Elizabeth's day was almost incalculable. Of the various influences that then came in to shape our literature, that of the Italians was unquestionably the greatest. In history, politics, philosophy, science, manners, in travel—but above all, imaginative work of every kind from drama to lyric—Italian books and Italian models were the passion and the rage. From the queen to the humblest courtier the Italian tongue was the test of good breeding. It is doubtful whether any foreign vogue before or since ever took such a complete hold upon English society. It has been computed by Miss Scott, the diligent bibliographer of Elizabethan translations from the Italian, that over four hundred translations from the Italian were made in England during the century (1550—1650), representing over two hundred English translators and rather more Italian authors, the two lists, Italian and English, comprising nearly all the most eminent writers of the day. Shakespeare, it is true, did not im-

printers in London, and the number of printing houses remained fixed at twenty-two until quite down to Commonwealth times. As it was the purists of the day complained bitterly of the lavish way in which premises were licensed. The number of presses in operation is estimated at between fifty and sixty and, considering that they were all small hand presses, the number of books, many of them large folios, which they were able to turn out speaks well for the untiring industry of their manipulators. Stereotyping was of course unknown; type was seldom allowed to stand or to be locked up for long; editions were small, rarely exceeding from twelve to fifteen hundred. Not the Privy Council only but also its divisional Courts of Star Chamber and High Commission seem to have exercised a general supervision over the output of the press; but such supervision was of a general and more or less accidental kind. The exact manner in which the censorship was exercised is not very easy to define; nor has the subject ever been worked out with the thoroughness which its intrinsic interest demands. It may be stated, however, in general terms that after 1559 every book, as a necessary condition of publication, had to receive the "allowance" of some recognised authority or other; but the authority varied a good deal. If the book were obviously free from political or theological taint the authority of the master or wardens of the Stationers' Company might suffice; if it had a doctrinal bearing, however remote, it might be necessary to obtain the licence of the Archbishop or the Bishop of London, or at any rate from the Archbishop's secretary or some well-recognised doctor of divinity, acting possibly as a deputy. In publishing plays it was necessary to affix the imprimatur of the Master of the Revels; the Earl Marshal sanctioned heraldic books; a deputy of the College of Surgeons medical books, and so on. Later on, in the time of the Long Parliament, regular boards were appointed for the licensing of books classified according to subjects. The universities appear to have had almost full licensing powers, or powers at least coextensive with those of the bishops; in them too was vested a somewhat ill-defined power of issuing licences for the printing of Bibles and Testaments. In case of a book being issued which had a bearing upon the government, state-craft, home or foreign policy, it would have been considered advisable if not essential to obtain the imprimatur of the Secretary of State; neglect of such a precaution might very well lead to both author and publisher being deprived of their ears. These possibilities notwithstanding, it cannot be justly said that the censorship of the Elizabethan press was excessively stringent.

A very important feature in a system in many respects far from regular was that there was a large number of patentees who were exempt from the ordinary licensing jurisdiction; so we find that a licence for printing playing cards was issued to one Bowes, the printing of all law books was licensed to Tottle (and if Tottle were lazy, as it was complained he was, the supply of law books had to fall into arrears). Similarly Day had a licence for psalters, Seres for primers, and Roberts for almanacks. The Bishop of London at one time claimed an exclusive right to license almanacks. The company strongly objected to these monopolies and gradually absorbed them, or as many of them as it could. They made large sums out of their privilege to issue Bibles, though this was disputed at various stages by the universities and by the King's printer; but the fact that the privilege was not altogether without its penalties was shown by the circumstance that in 1632 the King's printer was fined £3,000 for omitting the "not" from the seventh commandment.

mediately translate, but his poems are intensely Italianate, and the stories of fourteen of his plays are founded upon Italian fiction, while several other plays contain features which owe their suggestion to Italian sources. Of some seven hundred plays which survive from an output of probably over two thousand during the Elizabethan period, Miss Scott shows that nearly three hundred hark back to Italy for their *motif*; while if imitative plays or plays of remote suggestion were included, the number of "Italianate" dramas would be considerably greater.

The translators who swarmed so thickly had almost the whole field of Latin scholarship open to them. The direct influence exercised by the Greek authors was comparatively remote. The three writers of antiquity whose matter and form exercised most influence upon the Elizabethans were undoubtedly Virgil, Seneca, and Ovid, and after these the next most fruitful field was found in Italian authors of comparatively recent date.

Virgil had remained to some extent popular throughout the whole of the Middle Ages; his style had endeared him to the Latin fathers, apart from which it was commonly believed that in his fourth eclogue he had foretold the coming of the Messiah. The task of rendering his beauties into English had already been essayed in various forms by Caxton, Gavin Douglas, and Surrey. In 1555 an Oxford student and barrister of Lincoln's Inn, who was also a physician, named Thomas Phaer, commenced a new translation, completed after his death in 1560 by a fellow-physician called Thomas Twine. Owing to the influence which they exercised over the early English dramatists, the translations from Seneca's plays which were made by Jasper Heywood (1559—1561) were in some respects even more important. The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid was another book which had retained a distinct measure of popularity throughout the Middle Ages. These were translated between 1565 and 1567 into a ballad metre full of life and spirit by Arthur Golding, a man of good family, who was connected by marriage with the seventeenth Earl of Oxford and was a friend of Sir Philip Sidney. Golding also translated *The Commentaries of Caesar* in 1575. The *Metamorphoses* furnished a mine of fable and allusion to Golding's countrymen. Ovid was much read at the time in schools, where it is possible that

Golding's translation may not have been unknown. Shakespeare, at any rate, was well acquainted with it, and the frequency of his mythological allusions is largely due to this source. It was to him, in fact, very much what Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary* was to Keats. Marlowe, too, is saturated with Ovidian metaphors and images.

Even more directly influential upon the work of Shakespeare than Golding was the great prose stylist among our early translators, Sir Thomas North (1535—1600). North commenced his career as a translator with a version of the Spanish Guevara's *Diall of Princes* (1557). It was not until 1579 that he published his famous translation of Plutarch entitled *The Lives of Noble Grecians and Romans compared together*. North translated directly from the French version of Amyot, but he wrote with a spontaneity and an idiomatic vigour and wit which give his translation many of the characteristics of an original work. Shakespeare's appreciation of North is shown by the close adherence which he paid to the text of the translator in the plays of *Julius Cæsar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*; while *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pericles*, and *Timon of Athens* are all indebted in a less degree to the same source. Another book which exercised a widespread influence in its English form was the *Cortegiano*, or *Courtier*, of Castiglioni, a mirror of good taste in all that pertained to knightly exercises, literary accomplishments, and elegant love-making, which exercised profound influence over Northern tastes. *The Courtier*, first printed in the original Italian in 1528, was indeed an epitome of the social ideas of the Renaissance. It serves as a good index of the manner in which the new generation, the *fin de siècle* of the fourteenth century, had transferred their interests from the world to come to the world in being. This was rendered by Sir Thomas Hoby (1530—1566), a Cambridge man who served as English Ambassador in France. His translation, which like most of its fellows was far from literal, was published in 1561. In 1562 Arthur Broke, or Brooke, gave to the world his version of *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*, from the great Italian novelist who almost rivalled Boccaccio, Matteo Bandello (1480—1561). A few years later, between 1566 and 1567, William Painter constructed a much larger treasure-house of stories

drawn both from Boccaccio and Bandello and their imitators, Belleforest and Cinthio, to which he gave the name *The Palace of Pleasure*.

Later in the 'sixties George Turberville followed Golding as a translator of Ovid. In 1566 we have William Adlington's version of *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. In 1569 comes a further translation of Ovid and one of the *Æthiopica* of Heliodorus by Thomas Underdown. Sir Geoffry Fenton was simultaneously quarrying in the favourite mine of Belleforest, Boisteau, and Guevara, and glutting the English market with *Tragical Discourses* (1567). One of the monumental translations of the period was by this same Fenton. It was a version of the *History of the Wars of Italy* by Guicciardini—the book which, Macaulay relates, rather than read, the condemned felon went joyfully to the galleys. This bare enumeration may serve to give some idea of the volume of translating work that was being poured out in the early Elizabethan time.

More important perhaps than the translations from ancient classics or from Italian treatises and plays were the versions of Italian novelists—collections formed by combining together the most sprightly stories which poured from the lips of the Florentine tale-tellers of the fifteenth century. Many of the Italian stories were excellent of their kind. A good many were based upon ancient sources, but the writers were certainly not lacking in invention. These new Italian stories soon outweighed all other kinds of literary imports, and superseded the native products in popularity; coinciding with the rise of romantic drama in England they soon became the happy hunting ground of playwrights in search of plots. The great storehouse of Elizabethan plots was the collection of stories already alluded to, translated and edited by a Seven-oaks schoolmaster called William Painter (1540—1594), under the title of *The Palace of Pleasure*. The book was projected upon a comparatively small scale in 1562, but the first volume eventually came out in 1566, and a second volume was added in 1567, bringing the number of short stories up to nearly a

hundred, mainly from Italian sources. The collection must have come upon the English reading world with something of the freshness that *The Arabian Nights* did 150 years later. The success of the book was very great: reissues of it were soon called for, to which additions were made.¹ Excluding the Bible, it was the biggest book issued between the *Morte d'Arthur* and North's *Plutarch*. Its appearance upon the scene was all the more important because it arrived during the seed-time of the Elizabethan drama between 1565 and 1590. The contact of England with novel conceptions from abroad through the classic revivalists at the universities, through Erasmus, through Luther and the reformers, and through the translators of Boccaccio and Petrarch, had given an enormous stimulus to the intellectual activity of the nation. The English mind had suddenly blossomed out into manhood, ardent and indefatigable; the one thing it wanted was material to work upon. Of the scholastic philosophy and chivalric poetry of the Middle Ages there remained but little, and that little was to a large extent effete. The great intellectual wealth remained to be created, but it could not be created out of nothing. The drama was already indicated in England as the most convenient expression for imaginative capital, for nowhere had the interludes been more popular or better acted than in the English cities. The play, too, would reach many who could not read, or if they could read, had no money for books. Where, then, were the English playwrights to go for their plots? *Gorboduc*, an English tragedy derived from pseudo-classical Seneca, had appeared in 1561, and indicates the source to which English dramatists would have gone for inspiration, but for the rich domain of modern Italian myth which Painter and his fellow-translators were able to naturalise in England. The classic drama with its frigid conventionalities, its well-worn plots, its clumsy machinery, and its banishment of all action from the stage was by this unlikely means happily prevented from taking a deep root in English soil. An Italian plot soon became to be an almost indis-

¹ Among Painter's successors and rivals in the diligent collection of Italian historiettes were: Sir Geoffry Fenton, who gave the world in 1567 his *Certaine Tragical Discourses*, from the Italian through Belleforest and Pierre Boisteau; George Pettie, who produced in 1576 *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure*; George Whetstone, who produced in 1582 his *Heptameron of Civill Discourses*, mainly from the *Hecatomithi* of Cinthio; Robert Smyth; George Turberville (*Tragical Tales*); Barnabe Rich (*Forewell to the Military Profession*, 1581, exploiting Bandello); Thomas Fortescue (*Forest or Collection of Historiyes*, 1571).

pensable passport to English favour (thirty plays are based upon *Bandello* alone), partly because the public curiosity was aroused to the keenest pitch about everything that concerned Italy, partly because Italians lent themselves best to romantic treatment. When the classic and romantic schools came into conflict the romantic cause proved the winning one. One might almost say that Italy dominated the Elizabethan drama as much as it did the opera in England between 1750 and 1850.

The finest specimens of verse translation blossomed simultaneously with what was best in Elizabethan poetry and drama during the last few years of Elizabeth's reign. Then were seen the first-fruits of Chapman's ever-memorable *Homer*, *Fairfax's Tasso*, and *Sylvester's Du Bartas*.

George Chapman, "the learned shepherd of fair Hitchin Hill," was born some five years before Shakespeare, and has been claimed as an alumnus by both of our old universities on very insufficient grounds. In scholarship he stands as the rival of Jonson, Donne, and Bacon in the Upper House of letters; and his patrons and friends were the most distinguished that the age afforded. As a poet he made his first appearance at the age of thirty-five, when he produced his dignified and somewhat obscure and laboured *Shadow of Night* (1594). The two Hymns to Night and to Cynthia are written in heroic couplets, the same measure which he subsequently adopted for his *Odyssey*. Chapman was forty when he published the first specimen of his great translation as *Seven Books of the Iliads of Homer, Prince of Poets*, in fourteen-syllabled rhyming couplets. The twenty-four books of the *Iliad* were printed and published by 1611. The twenty-four books of the *Odyssey* followed, and were completed in ten-syllable couplets in 1615. The two qualities in which Chapman's translation excels are primitive strength and an untrammelled vigour in the coining of compounds (cloud-compelling, low-grown tamarisks, triple-feathered helm, mortal-man-made wound, scourge-obeying horse, high-deed-daring man, for instance). Keats's appreciation of Chapman's *Homer* is a notable testimony to its vitality as a poem; as a scholarly criticism its value, of course, is *nil*; for in exactitude Chapman, who makes no attempt to reproduce the minuter shades of the original, is wholly lacking. The rapid directness of *Homer*, the

plainness and naturalness of his thought, could obviously find no exact counterpart in the inveterate quaintness and lingering fancifulness of an Elizabethan. In those parts of the *Iliad* where the savagery of *Homer* is most conspicuous, however, Chapman is perhaps at his best, and is certainly unsurpassed by any subsequent rival.

Then gript Æacides his heel, and to the lofty flood
Flung, swinging, his unpitied corse, to see it swim
and toss
Upon the rough waves, and said: "Go, feed fat the
fish with loss
Of thy left blood, they clean will suck thy green
wounds, and this saves
Thy mother tears upon thy bed. Deep Xanthus on
his waves
Shall hoise thee bravely to a tomb that in her burly
breast
The sea shall open, where great fish may keep thy
funeral feast
With thy white fat, and on the waves dance at thy
wedding fate,
Clad in black horror, keeping close inaccessible state."

Such poetry as this, rough and unmistakable in its strength, makes it no great exaggeration to say that in Chapman the *Iliad* is best read as an English book, or that the generation which produced Shakespeare knew best how to translate *Homer*. "Since Amyot in France had, as Montaigne said, made Plutarch himself speak French, endeavours to bring into home fellowship the most famous of the ancients had spread from France to England; but in England, among all such labours, the most arduous and successful was that of George Chapman upon *Homer*." Chapman completed his work as a translator of *Homer* by his version of the *Hymns* and *The Battle of Frogs and Mice* in 1624. He was then sixty-five, and wrote proudly at the end of his volume, "The work is done that I was born to do." Chapman died ten years later, "a poet of most reverent aspect," in 1634. Anticipating the modest vein of Lilly-white, Ben Jonson was apt to say that there were only three men who could make a masque: he was one, Chapman an indifferent second, and Fletcher a poor third. But there is much more vitality in Chapman's *Homer* than in any of his other poetic or dramatic work.

Another truly poetic version was the *Godfrey of Bollogne*; or, *The Recoverie of Hierusalem*, from the Italian of Tasso, which appeared in octave stanza from the pen of Edward Fairfax

in 1600. In musical sweetness it far surpassed the previous version (1594) of the Cornish scholar and antiquary, Richard Carew, or the unconventional rendering (also in *ottava rima*) of the *Orlando Furioso*, by Elizabeth's saucy godson, Sir John Harrington. Fairfax owed a good deal to the poetic vocabulary and the scholarly taste of Spenser; but he paid back the loan to his poetical posterity, bequeathing much to delight the nicer spirits of the seventeenth century, such as Crashaw, Milton, Browne, Dryden, and pre-eminently Waller.

Fairfax has great beauties, which have found their most ardent eulogist in old Isaac d'Israeli. If he roughened the music of Tasso a little, he still kept it music, and beautiful music; some of his stanzas, indeed, "give the sweetness of the original with the still softer sweetness of an echo; and he blew into the rest some noble, organ-like notes, which perhaps the original is too deficient in. He can be also quite as stately and solemn in feeling; he is as fervid in his devotion, as earnest and full of ghastly apprehension in his supernatural agency, as wrapt up in leafiness in his sylvan haunts, as luxuriant and alive to tangible shapes in his voluptuousness. He feels the elements and varieties of his nature, like a true poet; and his translation has consequently this special mark of all true poetry, translated or original—that when the circumstances in the story or description alter, it gives us a proper and pervading sense of the alteration. The surfaces are not all coloured alike as in a bad, monotonous picture. We have no silken armour, as in Pope's eternal enamel; nor iron silks, as in Chapman (who is perhaps the only other various translator, nevertheless); nor an everlasting taste of chip instead of succulence, as in the Ariosto of Harrington." The charming pastoral scene in his version of Tasso (vi. and vii.) in which Erminia in disguise seeks refuge with a shepherd and his sons must have given a special delight to the author of *Cymbeline* and creator of Imogen.

One of the most admired European poems

of the Elizabethan era was the *Divine Weeks* of Du Bartas, an enormous epic upon the Creation (Paris, 1578 and 1584) by a very pedestrian Huguenot Milton. Numerous translators sprang up, but the only one to reap the harvest of a complete version was Joshua Sylvester, the son of a Medway clothier, who was educated above his rank, and conceived extravagant ambitions as a poet. He succeeded in developing a remarkable ingenuity as a weaver of quaint metrical patterns; his religious zeal inspired some respect; and he was not content until he had enlisted Prince Henry as a patron. On Prince Henry's death a post was with some difficulty obtained for him as secretary to the merchant adventurers in Middleburg, in Holland, and there he died on December 28th, 1618, at the age of fifty-five. His *Du Bartas* was begun in 1598 and finished in 1606; the version gained him praise from Drummond, Hall, Drayton, and others, as a "sweet-Sylvestre-nightingale," he was abundantly quoted in the anthologies, and was unquestionably one of the most popular of Jacobean poets.

Together with Spenser, Sylvester formed the chief poetical nutriment of Milton when a boy, and his influence was transmitted through William Browne to other pastoral writers. It is not too much, perhaps, to surmise that from *Du Bartas* and Sylvester Milton first conceived the possibilities of the sacred epic; but the influence upon Milton was mainly indirect, and the parallelisms are occasional and accidental rather than studied and deliberate.

As a pendant to this triad of verse translators we may conclude this section with miniatures of three of the most remarkable prose translators,¹ extending our survey from 1599 until the seventeenth century was fairly advanced.

John Florio, son of a Florentine Protestant, was born in London about 1553. He resided in his youth at Oxford, about 1576 was private tutor in foreign languages, and in 1581 matriculated at Magdalen. In 1578 Florio published his *First Fruits*, mainly English and Italian

¹ Of the minor prose translations it is needful only to mention *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius (1566), by William Adlington; *The Æthiopian History* of Heliodorus (1569), by John Underdown; *The Italian History* of Guicciardini (1579), by G. Fenton; the *Histories* of Tacitus (1591), by Sir Henry Savile; Giraldo's *Rudiments of Moral Philosophy*, by L. Bryskett; *Giovanni on Emblems* (1585), by Daniel; Machiavelli's *History of Florence* (1595), by Thomas Bedingfield; the *Leucippe and Clitophon* of Achilles Tatius (1597), by William Burton; *The Historie of Philip de Commines* (1601), by Thomas Danett; the *Livy* (1600), Pliny (1601), Plutarch (1603), Suetonius (1606), and Xenophon (1632), of Philemon Holland, the "translator-general" of the age; *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1586), by S. Rowlands; the *Histories* of Herodotus, by B. R(ich); *Amadis de Gaule* (1595), by Anthony Munday; *The Rogue, or Life of Guzman d'Alfarache* (1613), by James Mabbe.

dialogues. The *Second Fruites*, more Italian and English dialogues, with the *Garden of Recreation* annexed, containing "Italian Proverbs," appeared in 1591. His noted Italian and English dictionary, *A Worlde of Wordes*, with which there is every probability that Shakespeare was familiar, was published in 1598. He enjoyed the patronage successively of the Earls of Leicester, Southampton, and Pembroke, and at the close of the sixteenth century he was living in London on intimate terms with all the chief literary men and their patrons. There is no doubt that through Florio Montaigne spoke to Shakespeare, and probably contributed to convert the cast of his thought into a mould more serious than had yet been habitual to him. Florio's famous translation of Montaigne's *Essays* was licensed to Edward Blount in 1599, but was not published till 1603, in which year Florio became reader in Italian to Queen Anne at a salary of £100 a year, and on August 5th, 1604, was appointed groom of the privy chamber. After 1620 Florio resided at Fulham, where he died of the plague in 1625. There is something of the charm of an original book in the strutting display of Florio's acquired Elizabethan, but he is often far too fantastic to convey the pith of the original.

Thomas Shelton (*f.* 1612), apparently an Oxford man of an old Norfolk family, seems to have entered the service of Lord Howard de Walden, afterwards Earl of Suffolk. Acquiring a knowledge of Spanish, he translated the first part of *Don Quixote* into English in 1607, the task (it is said) only occupying him forty days. Shelton used a reprint of the original Spanish which was issued at Brussels by Roger Celpius in 1607. On January 19th, 1611-12, at the entreaty of Shelton's friends, it was licensed for publication to Edward Blount under the title of *The Delightful History of the Wittie Knight, Don Quishote*. The book at once achieved the popularity that Cervantes's work has always retained in this country, in which it was the first to appear after the land of its birth. In 1616 the second part of Cervantes's novel was reprinted at Brussels, and an English translation was published by Blount in 1620. No mention of Shelton is made in this volume, but internal evidence places it to his credit. With the second part was published a new edition of the first, and the two were often bound up together.

Shelton acquitted himself like a good paraphraser, and his version is readable enough in strong idiomatic English; but the original often proved too much for him.

Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty, eldest son of Thomas Urquhart, was born in 1611. He was admitted at King's College, Aberdeen, in 1622, where he proved himself to be an apt scholar. But before his "brains were ripened for eminent undertakings" he set off on the "grand tour," and travelled through France, Spain, and Italy, acquiring the accent of the several countries with such "liveliness" that he soon passed "for a native." In 1639 after taking up arms with the northern confederates who opposed the "vulgar covenant," Urquhart sailed to London, entered the service of Charles I., and in 1641 was knighted at Whitehall. Before returning to his estate (the financial conditions of which were not of the soundest), in the autumn of the ensuing year Sir Thomas published his three books of *Epigrams*. In 1642 he went abroad again for three years; but his affairs being mismanaged during his absence, from the close of 1645 he took up his abode in the ancestral tower of Cromarty, where, in the very year of his return, he prepared for the press his abstruse work on trigonometry called *Trissotetras*.

On the coronation of Charles II. at Scone, he finally quitted the old castle of Cromarty and joined the Scottish army, but, being taken prisoner at the battle of Worcester, he was lodged in the Tower of London. During the summer of 1651 he was removed to Windsor Castle, and in the next month was released on parole. Urquhart, wishing to convince Cromwell of his value to the country, traced the genealogy of the Urquharts back to Adam, inserting a line in the pedigree (like a street in a directory) with "Here is the Flood." His next publication was *The Jewel* (vindicating the Scots nation and proposing the adoption of a highly ingenious universal language), which, despite its obvious extravagance, has not only many graphic and humorous touches, but much truth of observation; and in 1653 appeared his admirable translation of the first two books of Rabelais.

After 1653 practically nothing is known of Urquhart; but it is very probable he remained for some years longer in London, continuing his translation of Rabelais, a third book of which appeared after his death. (The version

was completed with great adroitness by Peter Anthony Motteux in 1708.) It is stated that Sir Thomas died abroad, from an uncontrollable fit of laughter upon hearing of the Restoration early in 1660.

In an age of "conceitists" and "metaphysical" writers, emblematicists, and Platonists, not to speak of Muggletonians and literary quakers, Urquhart with his "antimetathetick commutation of epithets," his "illative ratiocination," his "exclamations in the front and epiphonemas in the rear," could have given points to Cowley himself. Few Englishmen before Sterne could have known the great Valois humorists as well as Urquhart did. His qualities suggest a veritable transfusion of blood from his original Rabelais (who affected craziness as a mask) into the pedantic Scots virtuoso, whose shrine might seem to have been sheer eccentricity. It seems almost a pity that

the creator of Baron Bradwardine, of Jonathan Oldbuck, Dominie Sampson, and Dugald Dalgetty, not to mention James I. in *The Fortunes of Nigel*, should never have infused the breath of enduring life into this Ancient Pistoll.

The Rabelais is perhaps the most brilliant and the most noteworthy of these three great prose translations, but it can hardly be said that any of them survive, except as landmarks, in the history of English prose: they have all been superseded.¹ The ornament in all these versions is extremely fine; they are adorned with a fancifulness which is thoroughly Elizabethan in form and colour, but the first object of a translation they do not succeed in compassing. They paraphrase with an emphasis and a brilliancy that is derived not from their author, but from their own inner consciousness, and consequently transform more than they translate.

¹ Florio by the vigorous and spirited version of Charles Cotton; Shelton by Ormsby and Watt; and Urquhart by W. F. Smith (2 vols., 1893). Among the minor translators of early Elizabethan time ought perhaps to be included the great Eliza herself. She produced some renderings from Boethius, Sallust, Plutarch, and Horace. Her letters, whether in French or English, certainly illustrate the vigour of her mind, but as a prose stylist the most that can be said in extenuation is that her translations were done rapidly, and with no idea of future publication. Creighton accepts as genuine the impromptu lines made to foil her inquisitors when her life was in danger under Mary, and a direct denial of transubstantiation might have been fatal:

"Christ was the word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it,
And what His words did make it,
That I believe, and take it."

She was emphatically a learned lady in a period of unrivalled feminine accomplishment; spoke Italian perfectly, Latin easily, Greek moderately, turned out prose and verse indifferently well, and regarded the professional tribe of authors with a cool glance of contemptuous disapproval.

CHAPTER II

FROM TRANSITION TO TRANSFORMATION.—II

“Songs and Sonnets, wherein oft they hit
On many dainty passages of wit.”

Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset—*The Mirror for Magistrates*—George Gascoigne—*The Steele Glass*—Thomas Churchyard—George Whetstone—George Turberville—*Tottel's Miscellany*—*The Paradise of Dainty Devices*—Some later Miscellanies.

BETWEEN the death of Surrey and the appearance of *The Shepherds Calender* in 1579, when English poetry, like a tropical forest in a south wind, begins to “rustle with growth,” the field of verse is occupied by two notorious conglomerates, *The Mirror for Magistrates* and *Tottel's Miscellany*. Both of these works owed their origin (like the *Lives of the Poets* and *Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club*) to the enterprise of “stationers”—the booksellers of Pope's day, the publishers of our own.

The Mirror for Magistrates was a book-seller's plan for a rhyming sequel to Lydgate's dull but popular *Fall of Princes*. Its main purpose was didactic; moralising such incidents of English history as illustrate the fall from high estate, the humiliation of the strong, and the fickleness of Fortune. The same theme had appealed both to Chaucer and to Gower, and the original model was the *De Casibus Illustrium Virorum* of Boccaccio. On its appearance in 1559 nineteen historical tragedies were narrated by six poets; Baldwin, Ferrers, Cavill, Chaloner, Phaer, and Skelton. The sources from which these poets derived their materials were mainly the chronicles of Hall and Fabyan, and they cover the same ground as several of Shakespeare's historical tragedies, as well as of Marlowe's *Edward II*. In 1563 the collection was reprinted with an addition of eight legends by, among others, Dolman, Churchyard, and Sackville. Sackville contributed not only a legend but also an allegorical *Induction*, and, both as regards conception and artistic skill, his work far surpasses that of the other contributors.

Thomas Sackville, who became Baron Buckhurst and eventually first Earl of Dorset, was born in Sussex in 1536. He is said to have graduated at Cambridge; he appears to have studied at Hart Hall, Oxford, and at the Inner Temple; he travelled and sat in Parliament; it was primarily, no doubt, his remote kinship with Elizabeth's mother Anne Boleyn that procured his elevation to the peerage. He was, however, a cultivated, sagacious, and highly presentable man and was frequently selected for ceremonial duties. About 1571 he joined the Privy Council, and in 1586 he was selected for the painful duty of communicating the death sentence to Mary Queen of Scots. He was severely rated by Elizabeth in 1587 for having “spilled” her case in the Netherlands and was directed to confine himself to his house. So well were the nobles of this queen trained in submission that Buckhurst not only kept to his house but refused to see his wife and children during his nine months' disgrace—so acute was his fear of giving umbrage to his royal mistress. He reaped his reward in 1599 when he was made Lord Treasurer of England, an office which he preserved under James I., and retained until his death in April, 1608. He was then Earl of Dorset. His father was the Sir Richard Sackville who suggested to Ascham the task of writing *The Scholemaster*; he made such a pile of money that Naunton with unusual sprightliness said that he ought to be called Fillsack, not Sackville.

Thomas Sackville had a share, and that no unimportant one, in a work which was in many respects more epoch-making than *The Mirror*

for *Magistrates*—namely, in the first English tragedy, *Gorboduc*; but for the present we must return to Sackville's part in *The Mirror*. Sackville commences his powerful *Induction* with a sombre description of winter. He may have derived the scene from Gavin Douglas, but if he adopts he improves upon it, as he does likewise upon that poet's device of associating the phenomena of Nature with the mournful events which he has to narrate, and with the mood in which he approaches them. Amidst the chill and gloom of winter he meets Sorrow, a woe-begone woman clad in black, whose home is among the Furies of the Infernal Lake. Like the Sibyl in the sixth book of Virgil, she takes the poet down to Avernus. At the porch of Hell they encounter a number of allegorical figures: Remorse, Dread, Revenge, Misery, Care, Sleep, Old Age, Malady, Famine, and others. When these abstractions have been passed, the poet and his guide are ferried across the Acheron and come to the region of departed spirits. At the cry of Sorrow the rout of unhappy shades gather about them, among them Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, wringing his hands

With ghastly looks as one in manner born,
Oft spread his arms, stretch'd hands he joins as fast
With rueful cheer, and vapour'd eyes upcast.

And so he makes his poetic *Complaint* which brings the collection of rhyming tragedies to a close. Harmonious and finely felt though it is, *The Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham* does not attain quite to the poetic level of the *Induction*, in which some of the allegorical figures are described with a graphic vigour worthy of Dunbar, with the advantage that harmonious language must ever have over dialect, however strong and homely. It is almost certain that Spenser owed much of his colour and imagery to Sackville. In vivid portrayal of the vices or the terrible attributes of humanity, it would be hard for a Spenser, a Dürer, or a Watts to surpass such concentrated limnings of Old Age and Malady as the following. The poet, as will be seen, uses the old seven-line stanza of Chaucer:—

Crookbacked he was, tooth-shaken, and blear-eyed,
Went on three feet, and sometimes crept on four,
With old lame bones that rattled by his side,
His scalp all pill'd, and he with eld forelore;
His wither'd fist still knocking at Death's door,
Fumbling, and drivelling, as he draws his breath;
For brief, the shape and messenger of Death.

And fast by him pale Malady was plac'd,
Sore sick in bed, her colour all foregone,
Bereft of stomach, savour, and of taste,
Ne could she brook no meat, but broths alone:
Her breath corrupt, her keepers every one
Abhorring her, her sickness past recure,
Detesting physick and all physick's cure.

George Gascoigne (1525—1577) serves as a link between the early Tudor group and the second or great Elizabethan generation. After the singing birds at the end of the reign had raised their voices, he soon came to be spoken of as merely endurable, and it is doubtful if there are many to-day who could endure to read much of him. Yet after Sackville he was perhaps the most distinguished of the pioneers of poetry in the age that preceded that of Spenser. Of a Bedfordshire family, he was a descendant of the great Chief Justice, Sir William Gascoigne. He entered Gray's Inn and seems to have been rather wild in his youth, nor did a succession of love affairs, debts, and travels combine to settle him. But he extricated himself by his wit from the reproach of being a mere wastrel, wrote sonnets and plays, and about 1567 married a well-to-do widow. His wife Elizabeth was the mother, by her first husband, of the charming warbler Nicholas Breton. In 1572 this "common rhymers" skilled to get himself elected M.P. for Midhurst, but his creditors and others managed to prevent him taking his seat, and Gascoigne took service under the Prince of Orange. He fought, like Churchyard, in the trenches at Goes, Flushing, Middleburg, and elsewhere. He went with a passport from William to The Hague (and was perhaps the first to describe that place as "the pleasantest village in Europe"), but the English auxiliaries were regarded with some suspicion by their Dutch allies, and being repelled from the gates of Leyden, which they had gone to relieve, Gascoigne and his comrades fell into the hands of the Spaniards. He was glad to get home to Walthamstow in the forest in 1574.

In Gascoigne's absence a volume of his poems and plays was collected and published without his knowledge or consent under the title *A Hundred Sunday Flowers bound into one Small Posy*. On his return he revised the work carefully, and reissued it as *George Gascoigne's Posie*, the contents of which are divided into three categories: Flowers, Herbs, and Weeds. The book is a notable one from

the amount of experimental work which it contains. In the first place are two dramas written in 1556 for production at Gray's Inn: *Jocasta*, a tragedy based upon the *Phœnissæ*, written in conjunction with Francis Kinwelmersh. After *Gorboduc* it is the second play we have written in blank verse, and, like *Gorboduc*, it is a Senecan play; it certainly exhibits a little more action, but it is lumbered with dumb shows and other clumsy machinery, and although nominally derived from Euripides it really is based upon Dolci's version of Seneca's adaptation from the original Greek. The other play, the *Supposes*, avowedly imitated from the *Suppositi* of Ariosto, is interesting as the first prose comedy we have coming from an Italian source and as anticipating in particulars a portion of the plot structure in *The Taming of the Shrew*. The name Petruchio was directly borrowed from it, while among other indications that Shakespeare was acquainted with this volume is a passage in which the heroine complains of the possibility of her leading apes in hell, very much in the manner of Beatrice. The lyrics interspersed include a charming reminiscence of Skelton, in the compartment of Weeds, called *The Praise of Phillip Sparrowe*, and the volume concludes with a critical essay in prose, the first considerable effort of its kind, styled *Certain Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse or Rhyme in English*, written at the request of the Italian Donati.

In 1575 Gascoigne took a prominent part in the shows at Kenilworth, devising a couple of masques, and, arrayed as a savage in a fantastic costume of moss and ivy, presenting the Queen with a long poem about fauns and dryads. In April, 1576, he dated from Walthamstow a dedication (to one of his numerous noble patrons) of his blank-verse satire of nearly 1,200 lines entitled *The Steele Glass*, which he commenced in 1562. The figure of a mirror for a title-page was a very hackneyed one; we have already had Skelton's *Speculum Principis*, and the most popular work of the day was *The Mirror for Magistrates*, while later we have *A Looking-*

Glass for London, and any number of other variations. By *Steel Glass* the poet wished to specify one of the old-fashioned steel mirrors, which could not have been apt to flatter, as opposed to the brilliant but specious mirrors of crystal or glass. Like most of Gascoigne's work, it is of relative rather than intrinsic value. After the satires in *terza rima* by Wyatt and Edward Hake's *News out of Paul's Churchyard* it is probably the first of our regular verse satires. In the autumn of 1577 Gascoigne went to Stamford on a visit to his old friend George Whetstone (who wrote a biographical *Remembraunce* of him in 1577), and he died at Whetstone's house in October. Meres in his survey of the Elizabethan wits ranks Gascoigne very high among the best for comedies and elegies. Webbe, Puttenham, and Harvey likewise praise. He was looked upon as a plentiful rhymers, an inventive wit, and a resourceful translator, yet no pedant, pithy and full of English feeling. These qualities may still be claimed for him, yet his work lacks the form and finish that are needed to confer a lasting vitality. Recognition of his value as a pioneer will not prevent us from acquiescing in the main with Drayton's summary verdict:—

Gascoigne and Churchyard, after them again,
In the beginning of Eliza's reign,
Accounted were great meterers many a day
But not inspired with brave fire; had they
Lived but a little longer, they had seen
Their works before them to have burned been.¹

Among the smaller poets and satellites, if a luminary of such moderate size as Gascoigne can be presumed to have had any lesser lights, were Thomas Churchyard, George Whetstone, George Turberville, and Barnabe Googe.

Thomas Churchyard (1520—1604), a Shrewsbury man, was a contemporary of Skelton and More, and lived on through hot service in the Low Countries, in France, Lorraine, Scotland, and elsewhere, until the reign of James I. So late as 1604 his *Good Will*, a poem on the death of Archbishop Whitgift, preserved—in a manner that must have seemed strange to the hearers of Herrick and of Donne, and the

¹ There are two rather indifferent collected editions of Gascoigne's works, one by Abel Geffs in 1587, another by Mr. W. C. Hazlitt in 1869 (2 vols., Roxburgh Library, 4to). The *Notes of Instruction* were reprinted in Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays*, 1815, and *The Steele Glass* with Whetstone's *Remembraunce* by Prof. Arber in 1868. There are careful accounts of him in Cooper's *Athenæ Cantabrigienses*, and in the *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, but these are superseded by the critical Life and estimate by Prof. Schelling, of Philadelphia, 1893. See also F. J. Snell, *The Age of Transition*, 1905.

survivors of Marlowe and Spenser—the lolloping verse, the curious alliteration and the mechanical antitheses of the transitional poets of the court of Henry VIII.; he was, in fact, the old Palæmon of Spenser's *Colin Clout*—

That sang so long until quite hoarse he grew.

George Whetstone (d. 1587), a native of London, was born nearly a quarter of a century after Churchyard, in 1544. He also fought against Spain in the Low Countries, where he met both Churchyard and Gascoigne, whose funereal example he followed in turning to letters for a livelihood. He wrote a large number of poems for the miscellanies, a play based upon one of Cinthio's *Hecatommiti*, and called *Promos and Cassandra*; while in 1582 he brought out his well-known and popular *Heptameron of Civill Discourses*, which was reissued in 1593 as *Aurelia, the Paragon of Pleasure*. Whetstone appears to have fought at Zutphen in 1582, and it may well be that he deserved military renown better than the laurel wreath with which Webbe was ready to credit him.

George Turberville (d. 1610), a descendant of an ancient Dorset family, was born in 1540, and accompanied Thomas Randolph on a mission to Muscovy in 1568. He wrote some metrical epistles from Muscovy, and in 1567—a year, that is, before he set out for Russia—he published his *Epitaphs, Epigrams, Songs, and Sonnets*. This was followed by *Tragical Tales*, 1567, mostly out of Boccaccio. He translated the *Egloges* of Mantuan and the *Epistles* of Ovid, both published in his fruitful year, 1567. He used blank verse in several of his epistles, but he was fonder of the octave measure, which he used without too much heaviness, though he was laughed at as antediluvian by the wits of 1600. Many of his so-called "sonnets" are love lyrics of varying metres.

The first tentative efforts of the Elizabethans are interesting to inquisitive students, but by ordinary readers have been relegated to the "dim and derided limbo of literature where poetasters flutter and twitter (as bats in a cave) like the ghosts of Penelope's suitors in Homer." Fortunately for us these croaking days are succeeded in the late seventies, culminating in 1579, by a joyous season of unexampled fecundity, a vocal chorus of singing-birds who answer each other from every brake

and covert. Many exquisite notes and trills must have been lost before a system of registry was developed by means of the poetical miscellany in the second half of the sixteenth century. The following is a list of the seven best known of these anthologies (excluding *The Mirror for Magistrates*) between 1557 and 1602:—

(1) *Tottel's Miscellany*, brought out by the well-known printer, Richard Tottel, under the title *Songes and Sonettes written by the ryght honorable lorde Henry Howard, late Earle of Surrey, and other*, in June, 1557, went through numerous editions, six at least in Elizabeth's reign; it included among its contributors, besides Wyatt and Surrey, Lord Vaux and Nicholas Grimald. Grimald, an Oxford graduate and son of an Italian-born employé of Empson and Dudley, may have been the original editor. The first edition contained forty pieces by Wyatt, ninety-six by Surrey, forty by Grimald, ninety-five by Vaux, Bryan, Churchyard, and others; in the second edition, of July, 1557, thirty of Grimald's pieces were omitted, but other anonymous pieces were added, making the total up to 280 (in place of 271).

(2) *The Paradyse of Daynty Devices*, published by Henry Disle in 1576; it contained poems which, as in Tottel, were mostly signed, and among the known contributors were Lord Vaux; Francis Kinwelmersh, a friend and collaborator of George Gascoigne; and the two musicians, William Hunnis and Richard Edwardes, Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal; Edwardes was reputed the best fiddler, the best mimic, and the best sonneteer of the age. This miscellany became almost as popular as its predecessor.

(3) *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, made by Thomas Proctor, and brought out by Richard James in 1578; the writers in this are indicated by a few initials only.

(4) *The Phaenix Nest*, brought out by John Jackson in 1593. The poems in this, which are mostly anonymous, are edited by R. S., of the Inner Temple. Among the known contributors are Thomas Lodge, Nicholas Breton, George Peele, and Sir Walter Raleigh, and there are many exquisite poems by anonymous writers. Later still in date are:—

(5) *England's Helicon*, published by John Flasket in 1600. This was a delightful collection of pastoral poetry planned by John Bodenham and edited by an anonymous A. B., most of the contributions being fortunately

signed. *Helicon* was issued in a revised form in 1614. A better anthology than this did not appear in Britain before *The Golden Treasury*. Among the contributors are Sidney, Spenser, Drayton, Lodge, Greene, Peele, Shakespeare, Breton, and Bamfield.

(6) *England's Parnassus*, brought out by N. Ling and others in 1600, and edited by

R. A., is rather a treasury of quotations, the references to which are often wrongly given, than a miscellany proper.

(7) *Davison's Poetical Rhapsody*, published by John Baily in 1602, and edited by Francis, the son of Secretary Davison. This is exceptionally valuable for the amount of unprinted verse it contains.¹

¹ In addition to these, there were a number of minor miscellanies, such as Clement Robinson's *Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1584), containing the ballad of "Lady Greensleeves" and the wooing song "Maid, will ye love me, yea or no?"; Antony Munday's *Banquet of Dainty Conceits* (1588); *The Passionate Pilgrim*, absurdly ascribed by a too enterprising publisher to William Shakespeare; *Wit's Commonwealth*; and Bodenham's *Belvedere*. The seven collections named above are, however, perhaps the most important, as they are certainly the most easily referred to, having been reprinted as *Seven English Miscellanies* under the editorship of J. Payne Collier in 1867. The three volumes of Park's *Heliconia*, 1815, contain Nos. 3, 4, and 6 in the list above, in addition to Robinson's *Handful of Delights*. Nos. 5 and 7 have been admirably edited by A. H. Bullen. In addition to the above, A. H. Bullen has collected two delightful volumes of lyrics from the Elizabethan song-books, brought out by such well-known musicians as William Byrd, John Dowland, Thomas Campion, Philip Rosseter, Robert Jones, Thomas Ford, N. Yonge, and the madrigalists Weelkes, Morley, Wilbye, Ravenscroft, and others. William Byrd's three song-books came out respectively in 1538, 1589, and 1611. The three song-books of the excellent lutenist John Dowland appeared similarly in 1597, 1600, and 1603. Thomas Weelkes was organist successively at Winchester and Chichester, and the composer of a rich diversity of Ballets, Madrigals, and Fantastick Aires. The verses in his song-books are never heavy or laboured, but always "bright, cheerful, and arch." Thomas Morley, a pupil of Byrd, is noted as the author of the first systematic *Introduction to Practical Music* (1597) ever printed in England. John Wilbye is generally regarded as the *primus inter pares* of the glorious band of English madrigal writers. "Love me not for comely grace" is one of the exquisite songs to which he gave a worthy musical setting in his "Second Set" of Madrigals (1608-9). Thomas Ravenscroft was a rare collector of "rounds, catches, and canons," given to the world in *Pammelia*, *Deuteromelia*, and *Melismata*. Jones and Rosseter were alike famous as lutenists and teachers, Ford and Yonge as composers and students of foreign music. Yonge was a singing man at Paul's, and a clever collector of strange madrigals. John Dowland studied in France and Italy before taking his Mus. Bac. at Oxford in 1588. He was a wonderful lutenist, and was eagerly welcomed at the Danish court in 1600, but he appeals to us most as a connoisseur of song. William Byrd (1539-1623), another Gentleman of the Chapel Royal, who ranks with Tallis in the van of old English music, made his reputation as Organist at Lincoln. His taste was rather Puritan, and he shows an undue fondness for square-toed psalmody, yet he also set some delightful pastoral songs. The volume of all this collected verse is enormous, not to speak of the dainty verselets "in private chambers that encloistered are." To the lover of word-music these composers are a race apart, inasmuch as they were not content to regard the words of a song as a "mere peg on which to hang the music, but sought the services of true-born lyrists." And it is "not too much to say that, for delicate perfection of form," some of these obscure librettists come within measurable distance of the choicest epigrams in the Greek Anthology. For the musical side of the subject the student should consult the Fourth and Fifth Chapters of Henry Davey's extremely interesting *History of English Music*. The contents of the best of the song-books, with comments on the more notable songs, are given in *Shorter English Poems (An English Garner, 1903)*. There, too, will be found a copious collection of sixteenth and seventeenth-century *Posies for Rings, Handkerchers and Gloves* (1624). "Taken a few at a time," says Mr. Bullen, "these suckets have a pleasant relish."

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND LETTERS FROM THE AGE OF CHAUCER DOWN TO 1611

“Wyclif, Langland, and Chaucer are the three great figures of English literature in the Middle Ages.”—
JUSSERAND.

John Wyclif—*Piers Plowman*—William Langland—William Tyndale—John Foxe—The English Prayer Book—
The Metrical Psalms—The Authorised Version of the Bible.

THE text we have put at the head of this chapter is one that strikes home with the vigour of what seems almost a familiar truth. Langland, who taught the people by poetic allegory in an old alliterative verse which takes us back to the days before the speech of the people was disdained as vile, and forms a kind of bridge between Anglo-Saxon and English; Chaucer, who naturalised Italian story and French verse in the new “mother-tongue,” as Midland English began to be called from about the time of the Black Death; Wyclif, who formed the conception of a popular Bible in the vulgar tongue or English of the commonalty. These three sum up what is of most pith and moment to the twentieth century in what remained of the Middle Ages to England in 1475.

John Wyclif belonged to the rich and respectable family of the Wyclifs, lords of the manor of that name in the Richmond district of Yorkshire. He was born from ten to twenty years before Langland and Chaucer, somewhere about 1322. He studied at Oxford, probably at Balliol, and soon attracted notice, being one of those men who occupy from the beginning of their lives without seeking for it, but being, as it were, born to it, a place apart and aloof from the limp multitude of men. When he was barely thirty-five the College of Balliol, which had lost its master, elected him to fill the post, which he seems to have held for a brief space only. In 1372, after sixteen years' study, he became a doctor of divinity. He was already famous as a writer and logician, and was preparing to qualify for the title of ecclesiastical politician.

Advancing upon the familiar lines of those who said that the action of the Pope must be restrained and controlled by General Councils, Wyclif soon outstripped all his predecessors in daring as a theorist. He was not satisfied, in fact, until he had destroyed the papal theory altogether, and by so doing acted as pioneer of that Protestant sap of the organisation of Christianity as a Church which has gone on more or less steadily ever since. Wyclif was charged in papal bulls ordering his arrest with no less than nineteen notorious heresies, and was tried at Lambeth early in 1378. But with the court and baronial backing at his command, the prelates manifestly dared not condemn him to any severe penalty. He was merely adjured not to disseminate his errors, and naturally paid no attention whatever to the adjuration.

But there was another side to Wyclif's activity, not theological or theoretical at all, but evangelical. He was the pioneer of the university extension movement, for it was the main object of his care in his later life that the plain outlines of the gospel story should be disseminated among the poor by college men in the guise of itinerant preachers.

Lollardism and Methodism, too, as well as the so-called “Oxford Movement,” began at Oxford. By the “poor preachers” the authority of the Bible was to be exalted against that of the Bishop of Rome. There was no printing press then, we must remember, and reading was still an accomplishment. About 1380, or possibly a little before, he began to arrange for the version of the Bible from the Latin which goes

by his name, and which he undoubtedly inspired, though the bulk of the actual translating was done by his Oxford disciples. His final stage as an insurgent against Church authority was reached when, in his antagonism to sacerdotal miracle-mongering, he questioned the miracle of the mass, and declared (though somewhat ambiguously) that he recognised in the sacrament only an emblem of remembrance and communion. In the eyes of opponents he had now quitted "error" for black heresy, which was promptly condemned by the assembled D.D.'s at Oxford in 1381. The political situation alone could now have saved Wyclif, as it subsequently saved Luther. As it was, the great peasants' revolt of this year was followed by a steadily accelerating movement of ecclesiastical reaction. But Wyclif himself was left unmolested, and retired to the peaceful parsonage of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire (where his pulpit may yet be seen): there he occupied himself with preaching to his rural congregations the sermons which have come down to us, in completing some portion of his translation of the Bible, and in composing treatises of enhanced violence against the abuses of the Church and the scandals of the pontificate, until his death on the last day of 1384. He was buried at Lutterworth.

Since the beginning of his academic course Wyclif had been deeply absorbed in the study and exposition of the Scriptures. His controversial tracts were varied by strenuous Bible sermons. The Oxford students listened with rapt attention to the life-giving words of his preaching, and soon, in accordance with the scholastic habits of the day, they styled him "Doctor Evangelicus." It was then that the idea first dawned in his mind of transferring the dead letter of the Latin version into the recently developed speech of his mother-land. This great work, which seems to have occupied him mainly about 1379-80, was of necessity based upon the Vulgate or Latin Bible, for Wyclif did not understand the original Hebrew or Greek. Part of the Bible had already been done into Anglo-Saxon and into English, especially the great treasure-house of mediæval devotion, the Psalms, and the whole Bible had been done into court French, which had but recently ceased to be the common language of the law courts and of the upper classes. As part of his great appeal to Scripture against the mediæval Church it was Wyclif's earnest

desire that the Scriptures in the living tongue should reach the people through the medium of the poor priests which he had instituted a few years previously. Wyclif himself seems to have inspired and supervised the translating of the whole Bible into the vulgar tongue. He himself was responsible probably only for quite a small portion of the New Testament. But a great emulation seems to have prevailed among his disciples in regard to the carrying on of the work by which their master set so much store. Nicholas Hereford rendered most of the Old Testament, and the whole was revised after Wyclif's death by his former curate at Lutterworth, John Purvey. Purvey's version of 1388-9 is less stiff and awkward, yet at the same time is freer from colloquialism and from Midland provincialisms than the original. In spite of the subsequent persecution of the Lollards, as many as a hundred and seventy manuscript copies of Wyclif's version are extant to this day, affording a faint hint of the impression which must have been produced by the first appearance of the translation. Its wide diffusion was in fact the first irreparable breach in the fortress round which the clergy had reared the Vulgate as an impregnable bulwark. Wyclif's Bible was extensively copied down to about 1450, and even amid the violence of orthodox reaction during the fifteenth century the Bible penetrated so deeply into the hearts of the people that the knowledge of it could not again be wholly eradicated. "It is certain that the Reformation had virtually broken out in the secret Bible readings of the Cambridge reformers before either the trumpet call of Luther or the exigencies of Henry VIII.'s personal and political position set men free once more to talk openly against the Pope and the monks and to teach a simpler and more spiritual gospel than the system against which Wyclif had striven."

Contemporary with Wyclif, or even before him in point of time, we have the strange and mystical book of *Piers the Plowman*. Along with Wyclif's sermons and Chaucer's tales it aids us in forming a large yet accurate conception of the social life of the time. It is, however, neither an exhortation nor a humorous reflection, but a calm allegorical exposition of the corruptions of the State, of the Church, and of social life, revealing to the people the true causes of the evil under which they were suffering. The author is a stern reformer, influenced

to some extent no doubt by Wyclif in his later work. Without the inward power of religion outer observances are to him but hollow shows, mockeries, hypocrisies. He is a severe judge of those dignitaries whom he takes to be blind guides and betrayers of their trust. Amidst the wealth and corruption of the world, the poet, whose moral feeling is intense and all-absorbing, looks to poverty as the best of purifiers. Like Chaucer, he looks for charity and unselfishness in the Plowman, and he almost adores the industrious, the down-trodden, rustic poverty of the humble and lowly.

Such opinions were wrapped by the poet in a prudent allegory, but they reached the ear and the heart of the people. During the whole of the fifteenth century it is probable that the rhythm of Long Wille passed current among the rural population of Central England, especially among followers of Wyclif. The author who thus describes himself as Long Wille is believed to have been William Langland, or Langley, a Shropshire man who was born at Cleobury Mortimer about 1332. His father and friends put him to school possibly in the monastery at Great Malvern, made a clerk or scholar of him, and taught him what holy writ meant. In 1362 he wrote the first draft of his poem, which he apparently began to compose in the month of May, while wandering on the Malvern Hills. Soon afterwards he went to live in Cornhill, with his wife Kitte, and his daughter Calote, for many long years. In 1377 he began to expand and modify his poem, in which he now alludes to the accession of Richard II. Fifteen years later, he wrote another and final draft of it. The poems were very popular, but the poet sought no patron, and remained exceeding poor, earning a precarious living by singing penitential psalms and hymns for the good of men's souls, and possibly by acting as a scrivener, and transcribing legal documents. He was probably a clerk in minor orders, and his time was spent between London and the

West; the last we hear of him is at Bristol. We have no trace of him after 1399.

His poem was not written in rhyme, but, with certain differences, in the old Anglo-Saxon alliterative metre, and in the West Midland dialect. No less than fifty MSS. of the three various drafts exist, but the poem was not printed until 1550.

A translation of the English of Edward III. is almost essential to an Englishman under Edward VII.¹ A lover guides Guillaume de Lorris through the paths of the Garden of the Rose, Virgil led Dante through the Inferno; the English visionary is led by Piers Plowman—the real hero of the work. Bent over the soil, patient as the oxen that he goads, he performs each day his sacred tasks, the years pass over his whitening head, and from the dawn of life to its twilight he follows ceaselessly the same endless furrow, pursuing behind the plough his eternal pilgrimage. Around him the idle sleep, the careless sing. Piers shall feed them all except the useless ones. There must be no unfairness to classes, but social endeavour must be the touchstone of each class alike. Every class that is content to perform its duties imperfectly, and without sincerity, without passion, without pleasure, without striving to attain the best possible results and do better than the preceding generation, will perish. So much more surely shall perish the class that fails to justify its privileges by its services. Langland let loose upon the indolent, the careless, the busybodies who talk much and work little, a terrible foe—Hunger. "Then Hunger seized Waster quickly by the Maw," but Piers intervened. "Let him live with the hogs," he prayed.

Piers Plowman soon became a sign and a symbol—a personification of the labouring class, of the honest and courageous workman. John Ball invoked his authority in his letter to the rebel peasants of 1381. His credit was made use of by the reformers and a remedy claimed for abuses in his name. The vehement and passionate England that produced the

¹ There are two excellent ones: (1) A rhythmical version preserving the old alliterative measure, itself a modification of the Anglo-Saxon measure, by Prof. Skeat (*The King's Classics*), 1905. (2) A modern prose version by Kate M. Warren, 1899. There is a delightful book on *Piers Plowman* * (1894), by J. J. Jusserand, and a more recent study (1900) by Mensendieck. For social conditions reflected in the poem, see G. M. Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wycliffe* (1899, and new edition 1904). About 1394, when the book of *Piers the Plowman* was at the height of its popularity, this popularity was taken advantage of by an unknown writer, who produced a sharp satire against the friars, less mystical and less charitable than Langland's poem, though written in the same metre, to which was given the name *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*, a short poem of 850 lines. For Wyclif see *Dictionary of National Biography*, and H. B. Workman, *Dawn of the Reformation* 1901; see also Morris and Skeat, *Specimens of Early English*, part ii. (1298—1393).

great rising of 1381, the heresy of Wyclif, and later the Puritan revolution of 1642, all these latent possibilities are indicated by the rumblings of Piers Plowman.

William Tyndale was born on the borders of Wales, probably about 1485. He was apparently brought up in Gloucestershire, a stronghold of the Church, where religious abuses are said to have flourished with some vigour. In 1510 he was entered at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, and is related to have improved himself in tongues, in which he excelled, and in theology. After taking his degree there in 1515, he proceeded to Cambridge, where the fame of Erasmus was still fresh in men's minds. There we know that he read with delight that wonderful satire, that *encomium morie*, in which Erasmus smothered with ridicule the defenders of the old traditional ignorance. "I totally dissent," says Erasmus in another work, "from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures translated into the vulgar tongue should be read by private individuals. The mysteries of kings it were perhaps better to conceal, but Christ wishes His mysteries to be published as widely as possible. I would wish even all women to read the gospel, and St. Paul's Epistles, and I wish they were translated into all languages of all people, that they might be read and known, not merely by the Scotch and Irish, but even by the Turks and Saracens. I wish that the husbandman would sing parts of them at his plough, that the weaver may warble them at his shuttle, that the traveller may with their narratives beguile the weariness of the way."

When in 1522 Tyndale, convinced already of the special antidote which the obscurantism of the Church needed, avowed his intention of turning the Word of God into English, it was in terms which were the very echo of these noble words of Erasmus. With this idea of translation in his mind, he sought the patronage of a distinguished scholar, Bishop Tunstall, in the summer of 1523. But Tunstall was a typical bishop in his timidity with regard to dissent, and Tyndale soon found that it would be impossible for him to accomplish his translation in England. A few sympathisers supplied him with money, and, with his amanuensis, William Roy, he proceeded through Hamburg and Wittenburg, where he paid a long visit to Luther, to Cologne, and there began

printing his version of the New Testament. A prominent Catholic got wind of the enterprise, and procured an order from the senate of Cologne interdicting the printers from proceeding with the work. Tyndale and Roy managed to escape to Worms with the sheets in October, 1525, and the work was soon set up again, and printed by Schoeffer, not in quarto, as originally designed, but in octavo. Copies were smuggled over to England early in 1526. But the king and bishops had been warned of the threatened danger, and the importation of the copies was strictly prohibited. Tunstall himself felt bound to preach against it; by such means the circulation was greatly stimulated. Two copies of the octavo of 1525 and one of the original Cologne quarto are still extant, the latter in a fragmentary condition in the Grenville collection at the British Museum. Apart from its merit as a model of English vernacular style, Tyndale's New Testament is a sound piece of English translation, not, as the learned Hallam erroneously states, taken from the German of Luther and the Latin of the Vulgate, but based primarily upon Erasmus's third edition of the Greek text. Even Sir Thomas More admits that Tyndale "before he fell into his Lutheran frenzies was full prettily learned." "Of the translation itself," says Froude, "though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is substantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius, if such a word may be permitted, which breathes through it, the mingled tenderness and majesty, the Saxon simplicity, the preternatural grandeur, unequalled, unapproached, in the attempted improvements of modern scholars, all bear the impress of the mind of one man, William Tyndale."

Shortly after the completion of the New Testament, Tyndale took refuge in Marburg, and was soon converted to a type of Protestant theology much more advanced than that which he had imbibed from Luther at Wittenburg. Rejecting not only Luther's doctrine of consubstantiation, but also Calvin's theory of a spiritual presence in the Sacrament, he followed the Swiss reformer Zwingli in regarding the Lord's Supper merely as a commemorative rite. In October, 1528, he issued his most important original work, *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, printed by Hans Luft at Marburg; it insists upon the supremacy of the civil power and the

paramount authority of Scripture in matters of doctrine. Unfortunately, Tyndale undid the good impression which this produced upon Henry by an unsparing denunciation of the divorce proceedings in a work of some pith called *The Practyse of Prelates* (1530). It is grievous to find two such men as Tyndale and Sir Thomas More engaged during these years in a literary controversy which degenerated into an interchange of the most scurrilous personalities. More defended the practice and paramount authority of the Church with the skill of an accomplished logician. Tyndale replied in a sharp and satirical *Answer* (1531), appealing to Scripture with an ultimate resort to individual judgment. No controversial issue could possibly be reached from such divergent premises; in the meantime Tyndale, first at Hamburg and then at Antwerp, was proceeding steadily with his translation of the Pentateuch, which was issued at Marburg by Hans Luft, January, 1530, 8vo. The only perfect copy of this edition is in the British Museum, as is also a copy of his unique version of *Jonah*, Antwerp, 1531. His translation of *Joshua*, *Kings*, and *Chronicles* was not printed separately, but was left in MS. and incorporated in *Matthew's Bible*. This was done through the agency of John Rogers, the first martyr of the Marian persecution who came out to Antwerp as English chaplain, and was converted by Tyndale. From the end of 1531, Tyndale's position in Antwerp had been a very precarious one. Not only had Henry VIII. demanded his surrender from the Emperor on a charge of spreading sedition in England, but several priests and ecclesiastical embassies were plotting against him. As long as he remained in the English merchant's house under the protection of a sympathiser named Thomas Poyntz, Tyndale was comparatively secure. Unhappily in May, 1535, he was decoyed from this refuge by a fanatical papist, betrayed to the Emperor's agents, and imprisoned in the Belgian Bastille, the castle of Vilvorde. Great efforts were made to procure his liberation; nevertheless, in the early summer of 1536 he was brought to trial for heresy, condemned, degraded, and sentenced to death. On October 6th he was bound by an iron chain to a stake, surrounded by faggots, strangled, and then burnt.

No one had dared to print Wyclif's Bible—the knowledge of which was consequently much restricted. Tyndale, no doubt, used it, and

also its original the Vulgate; but on the whole his translation is an independent one, based upon the Hebrew and Greek texts. More important still is the originality of his language and his happy collocation of phrases. His achievement fixed the type in accordance with which later labourers worked. His influence decided that our Bible should be popular rather than literary in its appeal. He felt by a happy instinct the potential affinity between Hebrew and English idioms, and enriched our language and thought for ever with the characteristics of the Semitic mind. The labours of the next seventy-five years were devoted to improving his work in detail.

His Bible had been prohibited in England, though large numbers of ill-printed copies were steadily imported from Antwerp, and meanwhile a decree had been passed by Convocation to the effect that the Bible should be printed in the vulgar tongue (1533). As the outcome of this, the first complete English Bible, a translation from the German and Latin, with aid from Tyndale's English, was issued in October, 1535. This did not prove wholly satisfactory, and in 1537 another version made up of Tyndale and Coverdale was published by the King's "lycense." This was known as *Matthew's Bible*. And here we must interrupt for a brief space our story of the English Bible.

John Foxe (1516—1587) was born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, and was educated at Magdalen College School, subsequently becoming a Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford; but he retired from his Fellowship in 1545 as, being already a fervent Protestant, he objected both to the enforcement of celibacy and to the obligation of taking Holy Orders. In 1547 he married a lady who, like himself, was then in the household of the Lucys of Warwickshire, and soon after this he was appointed to be tutor to the sons of the unfortunate Earl of Surrey. During this period he read largely in Church history, with a view to an elaborate defence of the Protestant position. In 1550 he was ordained deacon by Bishop Ridley, but on the accession of Mary he fled to Strasburg, where he printed in Latin the earliest draft of a fragment of his great *Martyrology*. A little later, at Frankfort, he became an adherent of John Knox, and later we find him at Basle, reduced to his last penny, and full of gratitude to Grindal for a gift of two crowns. Then

his fortunes mended slightly, and he became a reader for the press of a Protestant printer, Johannes Oporinus; yet he seems to have had a considerable amount of time for his own studies, and when the accounts of the terrible burning of Protestants reached him he set to work immediately upon a narrative of the Marian persecutions. In the autumn of 1559 he returned to England, where he was now ordained priest. In 1563, from the press of his friend John Day, he published his great work with a title borrowed from the *Actiones et Monumenta Martyrum*, printed at Geneva some two or three years previously. The success of the undertaking was immediate (four editions of the *Actes and Monuments* appeared during his lifetime), and, through Bishop Jewel, Foxe received a prebend in Salisbury Cathedral as a reward. But Foxe still remained poor; vainly he communicated to Elizabeth in very complimentary terms his intention of writing her Life. When she was excommunicated in 1570, he preached a strong anti-Catholic sermon at St. Paul's Cross. He next wrote a treatise on the legal settlement of the Church of England, and edited for Archbishop Parker an Anglo-Saxon text of the Gospel. In 1572 he showed his fidelity to his old patron by attending the Duke of Norfolk on the scaffold, and three years later he showed more courage in protesting against the burning of two Dutch Anabaptists. His obstinate refusal to adopt the surplice effectually prevented his promotion in the Church; but he lived on till April, 1587, when he was buried in St. Giles's, Cripplegate, where his monument may still be seen. Though extremely devout, and ill-provided with worldly goods, he seems to have been merry, sanguine in disposition, and kind-hearted and charitable to the poor. Though grave and bearded, he had more benevolence in his look than seems habitual to the grim Protestant divines of that age. In his dress he is said to have been shabby and even slovenly.

In its enlarged form of 1570 Foxe's work contains more than twice as much matter as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*. When it is remembered that he wrote the book in exile with the scantiest facilities for reference to works of learning, the reader is impressed not only by the amazing industry, but also, and scarcely less, by the historical respectability of the work. Foxe did not belong to the class of philosophical historians. He did not try

to hold the balance between contending sides. He was an out-and-out Protestant, and he wrote his book in a polemical spirit and for a polemical purpose. It was intended as an attack upon the Popish system, the errors and intolerant spirit of which he felt it his bounden duty to expose. Hence, especially in his marginal notes, he uses expressions such as modern taste would object to.

Yet, after the Bible, it is probable that Foxe's *Martyrs* moulded English Protestantism more than any single book. The first three Archbishops, Parker, Grindal, and Whitgift, cordially approved it, and Convocation ordered it to be set up in the parish churches and halls of the universities. Its influence in keeping alive Protestant feeling in Britain and North America is too well known to be disputed. It has passed through the ordeal of innumerable abridgments; it may still be seen, as Macaulay saw it, chained to the reading desk in the village church. Its lurid drawings of racks and faggots have given nightmares to generation upon generation of Protestant children.

The process of evolution to which we owe the English Book of Common Prayer was more rapid than that by which our Authorised Version of the Bible gradually assumed its final form. The originality of the forms of worship which go to inspire the English liturgy is not much greater than that of the subject-matter of our Bible. The outlines of the service are an inheritance which has come down to us from the remote ages of Christianity. During the Middle Ages a complicated system of ritual books had come into existence, and it was to the abbreviation and careful editing of these rather than to the origination of any novelties that reformers such as Cranmer very wisely and properly applied themselves. A number of primers containing the most familiar portions of the service, such as the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Litany, and Ten Commandments in the vernacular, were handed down from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The versions which they gave of the old Latin prayers formed a nucleus upon which the revisers of church books would most naturally work when they began to draw up a scheme for a liturgy in the vulgar tongue in 1542. The Sarum Breviary, which was still in use all over the south of England, was the principal model. The names of the popes and Thomas à Becket were scru-

pulously erased, the Litany was carefully revised by Cranmer, and the desire to make the public service of the church congregational generally avowed. Various experiments continued to be made, primarily in the Chapel Royal; the Litany, the Epistle and Gospel, and the service of Compline were given in English in the churches. An English order of Communion was further, in the first year of Edward VI., grafted upon the Latin office of the mass, restoring Communion in both kinds to the laity. But this step was merely preparatory to the publication of a complete book, upon the settling of the order of which Cranmer, with Ridley, Goodrich, Redman, and others were engaged at Chertsey in September, 1548.¹ The guiding principles of the revisers were fairly interpreted in the answer given to the Devonshire rebels, who objected to the new service, namely, that it was no new service, but "the self-same words in English which were in Latin, saving a few things taken out." It was, in fact, the most conservative of the liturgies produced by the Reformation. The Book thus drawn up was readily accepted by Parliament in January and promulgated in England, Wales, and Calais in June, 1549.

Ardent reformers such as John Hooper, who, having gone as far as Luther, were now beginning to look in the direction of Zwingli, were of opinion that the changes were not nearly sufficient; and many of the English divines went farther in this direction than was altogether approved by the foreign Protestant scholars, such as Bucer and Peter Martyr (appointed professors of theology at Cambridge and Oxford respectively), whose criticisms of the Book were studiously moderate in tone. But the desire for further alteration predominated, and at the special command of the King a fresh committee of revisers was

appointed, with Cranmer at its head. Various alterations were eventually made, chiefly in the direction of restricting vestments, holidays, and the ritual of baptism, and considerable additions were made at the beginning of the morning service. The doctrinal theory of the sacrament (which Cranmer held to contain a spiritual presence conditioned by the faith of the recipient) was modified through the medium of a change in the Communion service, and the Communion was restricted to Sundays. Ridley first officiated from the new Prayer Book on All Saints' Day (November 1st, 1552). Next year the accession of Mary put an end to the reformed service, but in 1559 the 1552 liturgy was restored with a few but not unimportant alterations, framed with a view of comprehending as many as possible within the pale of the Church.

The harmony of the various parts of the Prayer Book is certainly one of its greatest claims to our admiration. The English of the Litany, Creed, and Lord's Prayer is, of course, extremely ancient. The Decalogue, Canticles, and Psalms are taken from the Great Bible (*i.e.* the old translation of Tyndale and Coverdale as revised by Cranmer). The eighty-three Collects, originally very ancient, were rendered in Edward VI.'s day, mostly by Cranmer. Other prayers were added in 1559, 1604, and 1661, when the beautiful prayer for All Sorts and Conditions of Men and the General Thanksgiving were first incorporated. But throughout all these modifications the same devout and conservative spirit was in the ascendant, and the result was a most beautiful sounding-board of English prose, "an accumulation of ancient wisdom, a bequest of ancient piety, the form of words and bond of faith uniting English worshippers with the saints and martyrs of antiquity."

¹ Of the Book of Common Prayer, Thomas Cranmer (born at Aslacton on July 2nd, 1489), "first Protestant Archbishop of this kingdom, and the greatest instrument under God of the happy reformation of this Church of England," was undoubtedly the master-spirit and chief artificer. To his Church he gave it—a priceless possession—bearing the imprint throughout of his cautious temper, gentle disposition, and extensive liturgical learning. Clever controversialist, on the other hand, and subtle theologian though Cranmer was, his Book has far more of religion than recrimination about it; it provokes the spirit of devotion rather than that of debate, and that is why, striking a deep chord in English hearts, it is on the lips of millions of our countrymen to this day. How the cruelty of Cranmer's enemies used the impressionability of a sensitive man to try and discredit the movement he symbolised is too well known to need or to bear repetition. He was done to death on March 21st, 1556. He died in the place where Ridley and Latimer had suffered, and whatever be thought of his recantations his final end was heroic enough. He had done with the quicksands of logic, legal formulas, and constitutional maxims, and had gained a foothold in conscience. The fight had been long and bitter, but he had reached a conclusion at length; he had "professed a good profession before many witnesses." (See *Thomas Cranmer*, by Prof. A. F. Pollard, 1904.) Cranmer's first *Book of Homilies* dates from 1547.



From a Painting by Ford Madox Brown, reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. Charles Rowley

Cordelia's Portion

Before we leave the Prayer Book altogether, and its exquisite patterns of English prose, we must mention, as having had a considerable influence upon English verse, the old Metrical Version of the Psalms. The original aim was to furnish the people with sacred ballads for everyday use, and the pioneer effort was "Certayne Psalms chose out of the Psalter of David and drawn into English metre by Thomas Sternhold, groom of the King's Majesty's robes," about 1547; a second edition containing thirty-seven in place of nineteen psalms was published in 1549. Sternhold, of whom very little is known, died in this year, having written in all some forty versions, nearly all in the older form of Common Measure (C.M.), the ballad measure of *Chevy Chace*, with only two rhymes. In 1562, after various intermediate experiments, the Complete Psalter was published by John Daye as "The Whole Book of Psalms, collected into English metre by T. Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others: conferred with the Ebrue, with apt notes to sing them withal." The others include William Whittingham, John Pullain, Robert Wisdome, Richard Cox (Bishop of Ely), and Thomas Norton, the joint author of *Gorboduc*. Although not fully authorised the Metrical Version was certainly permitted and used as the psalm book in many churches, and so it remained, in spite of the frowns of High Church and austere Puritans alike, and of the competition of "Tate and Brady" (1696), until well on in the eighteenth century, "a venerable monument of the Reformation." Its poetical merit was slight; of Sternhold and Hopkins it was said by Fuller, and constantly repeated, that their piety was better than their poetry; they had drunk more of Jordan than of Helicon. Yet if they had been more poetical, it is probably true that they would have been less popular. It must be remembered that when they were written the great outburst of Elizabethan poetry was still in the future. They had the merit of plain meaning, they were tunable, and of a striking fidelity to the original Hebrew. In their original form they are now quite extinct, but their fall was broken by the incorporation of considerable extracts into the most popular hymn-books. "It is pleasant to think that in Sternhold's 23rd, 'My Shepherd is the Living Lord'; in the old 100th, 'All People that on Earth do

Dwell'; in Kettra's 104th, 'My Soul, Praise the Lord,' and one or two more, we still retain some links with so venerable a book and history."

We can now resume the thread of the history which tells of the coping-stone put to the sumptuous edifice of Elizabethan translations by the appearance of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611. We had got as far as the appearance of Matthew's Bible, shortly followed in 1538-9 by two further revisions. The second of these in a revised form, with a preface by Cranmer, of April, 1540, was widely circulated in England and known as "The Great Bible." This was the Bible of the Edwardian reformers and the Bible presented to Elizabeth on her accession. It is the psalter of this version that we still use as printed in the Prayer Book. Another very careful revision was issued by English exiles at Geneva in 1560, and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth.¹ The scholars responsible for it had the advantage of highly finished Latin versions by Castalio and Beza. The disadvantage inherent in all the sixteenth and seventeenth-century work was, of course, in this—namely, that the Greek texts used were late and faulty as compared with some of the more authentic codices to which we now have access. The Geneva version was soon imported largely into this country, and the Great Bible as read in the churches was subjected to comparisons that were often disparaging.

Archbishop Parker, in consequence, took in hand a new translation, to be carried through by co-operative effort, to remove all errors and obscurities from the Great Bible, adhering still, however, to the scheme of a popular and not a literary version, retaining as much as was possible of the old phraseology. The work appeared in October, 1568, in a magnificent folio, with portraits of the Queen, Leicester, and Burleigh, 140 wood engravings, and the simple title "The Holie Bible." Of the revisers (who seem as a body to have relied very largely upon the Geneva version), eight were bishops, hence the name assigned to the penultimate version of a remarkable series, "The Bishops' Bible." It soon replaced the Great Bible, and was sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority for public use; but it did not supersede the Geneva. Eighty-six editions of

¹ This is known to bibliophiles as the "Breeches Bible," because "breeches" is substituted for "apurns" in Genesis iii. 7. The text was first divided into "verses."

the latter appeared between 1568 and 1611 to only twenty of the Bishops' Bible, which was, however, carefully revised as regards the New Testament in 1572.

The stimulus which prompted the setting on foot of the Authorised Version was mainly due to James I. The matter was broached at the Hampton Court Conference in January, 1604. The King pressed forward the scheme during the ensuing summer, and took a prominent part in selecting the fifty-four translators and allotting the work to them.

Forty-seven scholars were eventually divided into six groups and set to work in 1606-7. In 1610 the whole translation was revised by six delegates, two from Westminster, two from Oxford, and two from Cambridge, to whom six coadjutors were soon added. After seven years' steady work the MS. was finally revised for press by Dr. Miles Smith, aided by Bishop Bilson, and in 1611 the Authorised Version was imprinted at London by Robert Barker.¹ The book was stated to be produced by "his Majesty's special command," and "appointed to be read in churches," by whose authority is not precisely known.²

The revisers did not attempt to render the Bible afresh into the common language of their own day. This may be seen in the quaint and highly decorative English of the dedication, and in the interesting, if somewhat bombastical, preface. Their great merit consists in the fact that they so fully retained the simple and racy idiom of the earlier versions. Occasionally they even replace a familiar word by one more archaic, *e.g.* they substitute "charger" for "platter." As in the Liturgy, the Latin and Old English word may be seen side by side, as in act and deed, labour and work, transgression and sin, desert and wilderness, remission and forgiveness. Upon the whole, however, the Authorised Version is

marked by an unusual predominance (greater even than in Swift) of Teutonic words. It is in every way a complex unity, the final product of a long series of strenuous, fortunate, converging efforts. The result of a century of toil and study from the conception by Tyndale to the conclusion in 1611, during which the researches of the ripest scholars, not of England alone, but of Europe, were absorbed into the work, it has been almost universally commended, not only for its fidelity, but also for its extraordinary force and beauty. Its harmony, simplicity, and energy have drawn panegyrics from foreigners and Catholics. Its English is, in the opinion of all the best judges, of uncommon beauty. "It lives in the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells. . . . Its felicities seem to be almost things instead of words; it is a part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness; the memory of the dead passes into it; the potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses; the power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. . . ." A striking testimony to its essential greatness is the fact that instead of a cause of division, in this land of sect and schism, it has ever been a bond between the different sects, for it was soon adopted by the Puritans (Scottish, as well as English), and preferred even to the Genevan. After the Koran, it is doubtful whether any book has been more recited or read. It was of special importance to this country from the fact that England had no Luther, Calvin, or Knox. Hers was a common soldiers' Reformation due largely to the circulation of the vernacular Bible. So it has become part of the national mind, and has permanently impressed upon that mind a certain purity of the classic age of English literature. Its noble figures, happy turns, and pithy sentiments are upon every lip. It pervades the whole literature of our country.

¹ Octavo and quarto editions appeared in 1612: the original Folio in Roman type in 1616. Of the variations and errors in early issues a good many were silently corrected long before the Great Revision of 1881-5. The dates in the margin were inserted from Ussher's *Annales* in 1701.

² On the development of our English Bible, consult *William Tyndale, a Biography*, by R. Demaus; *Westcott's History of the English Bible** (3rd ed., 1905); *Eadie's English Bible*, 1876; *Moulton's History of English Bible*, 1878; *Lovett's Printed English Bible*, 1894; *Dore's English Bibles* (2nd ed., 1888); *Quarterly Review*, April, 1870.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF THE DRAMA

"The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral."—*Hamlet*.

"Few events in our literary history are so startling as this sudden rise of the Elizabethan Drama."—*Green's Short History of the English People*.

Religion and the drama—Church festivals and moralities—The church, the market-place, the banquet-hall—Heywood's interludes—*Gorboduc*—Senecan plays.

THE evolution of religious worship leads inevitably to the exclusion of ecstatic elements and to the regularisation of every kind of religious demonstration within the bounds of a strict decorum. In the more vivid pages and passages of Church history conditions were different, and the great festivals of Holy Church during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries were commonly attended by strange orgies, saturnalia, and burlesques of sacred rites and mysteries in which the dramatic, animal, and loutish instincts beneath the cassocks of the innumerable vicars, minor clerks, acolytes, choir-boys, and lay brethren in the Church found a free vent for expression. Singing, grimacing, drinking, and dressing-up in masks formed prominent features in the topsy-turvy mumblings and *festi fatuorum*, with their Fool Bishops, Boy Bishops, Lords of Misrule, and the rest—of which Scott gives us a tantalising glimpse in his *Abbot*. The nobility gave them money as contemptuously as Theseus's courtiers threw coins to Bottom and his troupe, but the people adored these clownish and irreverent amusements, which were avowedly undertaken for their delectation, *more antiquo, pristinum modum*, "*ad solacium populi*." The responsible clergy tried to discipline them, but usually quite in vain, for any attempt to suppress the mummeries invariably led to popular tumults and street riots. The popular drama of the professional troubadours, mimi, and buffoons was thus in a way borrowed by the Church, in the person of the inferior clergy, in order to amuse the people, to keep them in a

good humour, and to inveigle pence from the pockets of the well-to-do.

But the connection of the Church with the rise of popular drama was a much closer and profounder one than this. In England, as in India, Greece, France, where you will, the theatre is immediately the outcome of an act of worship. Religion adopted, and may almost be said to have created, the drama. It was born in the sanctuary, and its primitive form in the modern world was that of a religious pageant designed to commemorate Gospel scenes by either direct or allegorical representation. In Greece, its evolution from a ritual dance at festivals, in which one half-chorus set to another and gradually introduced spokesmen, is almost equally roundabout and indirect.

Simultaneously with the growth of the folk-drama was a singular new birth of drama in the very bosom of the Church's own ritual. The Mass, the commemorations of Palm Sunday and of Good Friday, of Maundy Thursday and of Christmas Day, such services of those of the *Tenebræ* (or extinction of lights), or of the *tollite portas* (or the dedication of the Church)—all these contained strong elements of drama, together with a marked potentiality of dramatic development. Symbolism and mimetic action were already there. What was wanting was dialogue, and this was soon to be supplied by the practice of antiphonal singing. It is, indeed, from the antiphon, in which one-half of the choir answers the other, or a choir as a whole answers its cantor or precentor, that the gradual development of the liturgical drama may most directly be traced.

An equivalent to the celebration of Easter was supplied for the Christmas festival by a representation of the adoration of the shepherds known as the *Officium*, or *Misterium Pastorum*, of which we have manuscripts dating back to the thirteenth century, and just as the Easter celebration centred round the sepulchre erected in the choir, so the embryo drama of the shepherds, and later that of the Magi or three kings, had its material starting-point in the crib with the Christ-child in the manger, and with a live ox and ass, which are still exhibited near the altar in Catholic churches at Christmas-time. At the same time a star lit with candles was hung from the roof of the church. With these plays, of the Pastores and the Stella, the Lamentation of Rachel was often amalgamated. This liturgical drama afforded a good introduction to the offering of oblations by the congregation; and we soon have similar representations springing up in the shape of a Daniel drama, a *Suscitatio Lazari*, and an Advent play representing a duel between Antichristus and Ecclesia. This evolution was practically complete by the thirteenth century, and during the hundred years from 1250 to 1350 a significant change takes place which transfers the presentment of these dramas from the clergy, and from the nave and choirs of the large churches, into the hands of the laity in their market-places and guild-halls. The natural result was the broadening of their human, as distinct from their religious, aspect. Conceived originally as a mere expansion of the regular office, with a view of bringing home the great events of the Gospel narrative to the hearts of the people, they came in time to be primarily spectacles to amaze the people and to make them laugh. The existing plays received

accretions on every side. The texts were amplified, new scenes were added, the dresses and properties were greatly elaborated, until the process culminated in the formation of those great dramatic cycles of which the English Corpus Christi plays are perhaps the most complete examples.

In a few extant examples the plan of the miracle play was extended to subject-matter other than religious in character. We thus have stories such as those of Jeanne of Arc, Griselda, Robert the Devil, and the Fall of Troy thrown into the shape of miracle dramas, or, as the French call them, mysteries. More important in its results was the extension of the miracle in the direction of allegory giving rise to the morals or moralities, as they came to be called. The germ of these plays may be seen in the symbolism of some of the earlier miracles, such as that of Antichristus or the dialogue of the Heavenly Virtues, in which Truth and Righteousness denounced the guilty Adam, while Mercy and Peace pleaded in his favour. The Dance of Death was a subject which lent itself to similar treatment. The gross impartiality with which Death took liberties with Pope and Emperor, no less than with Clown and Beggar, was indeed an idea which took a strong hold upon the mediæval imagination. A similar motive was the pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins, and the finest of these fifteenth-century moralities,¹ the now well-known *Everyman*, was evidently a growth from this same root. There is a Dutch play on precisely the same theme as *Everyman*, and it has been much disputed which of the two is the original. It is not improbable that both plays have a common original.

We have seen how the religious drama

¹ The morality which became so popular at the close of the fifteenth century must not be regarded as superseding the miracle drama, but as affording a pleasant variety of religious teaching upon the stage. As the miracle illustrated the narrative portion of the Church service, so the morality illustrated the sermon and the Creed. This was done by means of allegories, many of which are inferior in force and vividness only to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*, and *Mr. Badman* of John Bunyan. Of the older type of morality, the most typical are *The Castell of Perseverance*, perhaps as early as 1400, *The Pride of Life*, *Mundus et Infans*, and *The Moral Play of the Summoning of Everyman*. Among moralities of the second and later type, in which the dramatic tendency is more conspicuous, and the allegory not quite so much obtruded, are *Man Kynd*, written perhaps about 1480; *The Goody Interlude of Nature*, written by Archbishop Morton's chaplain, Henry Medwall, a few years later; and *Hyckescorner*, a moral interlude in the later years of Henry VII., containing humorous dialogue, real characters under allegorical names, and some new situations, such as the setting of Pity in the stocks. In the same class must be placed a later and much duller Protestant interlude called *Lusty Juventus*. The later interludes of John Rastell and John Heywood, in which the moral and allegorical element is wholly subordinated, if not entirely dropped out, bring us to the very threshold of the Elizabethan farcical comedy, to the evolution of which the moral interlude had contributed most powerfully by its insistence upon social types. The morality, gradually dropping the didactic purpose and the allegorical form bequeathed to it by its old traditions, passes insensibly into the imitation of manners. See that great work of exploration, Chambers's *Mediæval Drama*.

gradually migrated from the church choir to the nave or churchyard, and then from the religious precincts to the guild-hall or market-place. The drama was now to migrate still farther, to the banqueting-hall. To this new type of drama specially suitable for a banquet in the hall of some great noble, the title of interlude—that is, merry dialogue between two or more performers—seems to have been given from the first. The ubiquitous minstrels, who must have suffered considerably from the competition of the guilds, especially as these latter seem to have travelled with their pageants, made a special point of the playing of these interludes. Many of them gave up the older minstrelsy as a specific calling and took up interlude playing, though they commonly retained their old livery and put themselves, as before, under the protection of nobles and persons of honour. The apparatus necessary for these interludes was on an extremely small scale as compared with that of the older pageants. In exceptional cases, a special room seems to have been put apart for them. A relic of the old minstrel days was the prayer for the sovereign with which their entertainment concluded. They soon became very popular in the towns, where, after a first performance before the municipality, they would find a profitable pitch in the courtyard of some old-fashioned inn with convenient outside galleries. In some villages they maintained the right of playing in the church, probably on trestles at the west end, but more ordinarily they erected their stage on the village-green. In the course of their peregrinations they doubtless excited the emulation of local amateurs, such as the Mechanicals of Athens (Stratford), who sometimes played in wagons. The children of St. Paul's and of the Chapel Royal, gentlemen of the Inns of Court, scholars of Westminster, Eton, and of the universities proved more serious rivals of the professional players.

From the morality the interlude drew abstractions; from the farce, a variant form specially popular in France (*L'Avocat Patelin*), it drew social types. The possibility of vital drama lay in the direction of an advance to the portraiture of individualities.

John Heywood, the most noted writer of farces and interludes that the court of Henry VIII. could boast, was born in London about 1497, studied at Broadgates Hall (Pembroke College), Oxford, became a skilled musician on lute and

virginals, and was entered in 1515 as one of the King's singing men. He was specially attached to the Princess Mary: instructed her, in all probability, in the mysteries of virginal playing, and played interludes for her amusement with the choir-boys under him. On Mary's coronation Heywood uttered a Latin speech in her honour as she entered the precincts of St. Paul's. His later history is uncertain, but he probably lived well into Elizabeth's reign, down to the dawn of the great drama in the 'eighties. In 1575 he wrote to Burleigh from Mechlin. He appears to have been a humble member of the party of reform within the Church, of which More and Erasmus were the luminaries; and the keen interest which More always took in the stage as a vehicle of instruction may have quickened the zeal of Heywood in writing some pieces for it which should not be so purely moralising and didactic as satirical and amusing. Hence *The Dialogue of Wit and Folly*, *The Play of Love*, *The Playe called the Foure P.P.*, *The Play of the Wether*, *The Pardoner and the Frere*, and his "masterpiece," *The Mery Play betwene Johan Johan the husband, Tyb his wyffe, and Syr Jhan, the preest*, were all written somewhere about 1530. In approaching this last production, as in approaching Chaucer's tales of the Miller and Reeve, or, later, *The Merry Wives*, we must, of course, leave our morality behind, and accept the playwright's and tale-teller's convention that cuckoldy and cuckold-making are prime subjects for humour. This granted, says Mr. Pollard, "it will be difficult to find a flaw in the play. Like *The Pardoner and the Frere*, it is short, only about half the length of the plays of *Love*, *The Wether*, and *The Foure P.P.*, and it gains greatly from being less weighted with superfluities. Johan Johan himself, with his boasting and cowardice, his eagerness to be deceived and futile attempts to put a good face on the matter, his burning desire to partake of the pie, his one moment of self-assertion to which disappointed hunger spurs him, and then his fresh collapse to ludicrous uneasiness—who can deny that he is a triumph of dramatic art, just human enough and natural enough to seem very human and natural on the stage, but with the ludicrous side of him so sedulously presented to the spectator that there is never any risk of compassion for him becoming uncomfortably acute? The handling of Tyb and Syr Jhan is equally clever."

From the farcical situations that had hitherto performed the task of holding up the ends of an interlude, we now begin to get the idea of an organic plot. The two elements—native and foreign, English and classical, farcical and comic—are seen together admirably side by side in *Roister Doister*, a merry “Comedie or Enterlude,” written, it is believed, about 1550¹ by a somewhat notorious Eton and Westminster master, Nicholas Udall (1506—1556), and first printed in all probability in 1552, though the first dated copy we have bears 1567 on the title, with the addition of a conventional tag in honour of Queen Elizabeth. The plays of Plautus and Terence had been much admired and studied since the revival of learning; and in this comedy, though features borrowed from the old vernacular drama are by no means wanting, the two principal characters, Ralph, a pusillanimous, vain, and foolish braggart (the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus), and Matthew Merygreeke, a needy adventurer and parasite, are types directly borrowed from the Roman stage. A school drama of a similar type, probably written about the same time, and also based upon Plautus, is the anonymous *Jacke Jugeler*, written, like *Roister Doister*, in rough twelve-syllable rhyming couplets. The element of broad jocularitv is very strong, both in this play and in the probably contemporary *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, first printed apparently in 1575, but acted not later than 1563, and perhaps a full decade earlier. This coarse specimen of early comedy was written for a college entertainment, very probably by W[illiam] S[teven-son], a fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, who died a prebendary of Durham in 1575; the form of verse is not Alexandrine but rhyming fourteeners, the dialogue is thrown into a more or less conventional rustic dialect, and, unlike its predecessors in English comedy, both plot and characters are purely native. The famous drinking song at the commencement of Act. II., “Back and syde go bare, go bare,” is extant in more than one version, and may be a little, though not much, older than the body of the play. The *Misogonus* of Thomas Richardes (?), written in 1560, and embodying hints from Terence; the *Damon and Pythias* (1565) of Richard Edwardes, containing features of courtly allegory strongly suggestive of the later efforts of Lyly; and *The Supposes* (1566) of George Gascoigne, a

prose translation of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, and the most Jonsonian of English comedies before Ben Jonson—are all interesting and typical works of this transition period. The genius for humorous drama which the English people had shown so unmistakably in the shepherds' plays in the old miracle cycles, and in some of the interludes of Heywood, is here seen to be quickened, directed, and, above all, shaped by fusion with foreign ideals and imitation of classical examples. The cross-fertilisation of native genius by foreign *esprit* and sense of form which is seen so clearly in 1066, and later upon the eve of the Augustan and Romantic movements in English literature, is seen nowhere more significantly than in the English drama during the quarter of a century preceding the marvellous efflorescence known as the Elizabethan drama.

Between comedy and tragedy there stands a species of drama almost peculiar to England, of immense popularity and no little importance as showing the vitality of native dramatic development. This is the native chronicle drama or history play—a species to which Shakespeare himself devoted, roughly speaking, as much as a third part of his energies, and which is represented in the first folio of his *Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies* by a complete section to itself. We can trace the evolution of this kind very distinctly from the old English morality. We can see the morality, first tintured with history, and so becoming an historical morality, and then gradually shedding the morality and assuming the features of the chronicle history familiar to us in *King John* and *Richard III.* The process may be observed in an interlude like the *Kyng Johan* (1548) of John Bale (1495—1563), a Suffolk and St. John's, Cambridge, man, who married and took orders, thus committing himself to the Protestant side, and, after the ordinary vicissitudes of that age, was promoted by Edward VI. to a bishopric (Ossory) and confirmed by Elizabeth. He treats King John as a victim of papal tyranny, and in doing this the veil of allegory gets torn aside and the real personalities of history stand revealed. Here we can see, as it were, the abstractions of the older morality resolving themselves into historical characters. Thus Sedition becomes Stephen Langton; Private Wealth, Cardinal Pandulph; Usurped Power,

¹ Possibly ten years earlier, for his pupils at Eton.

Innocent III.; and so on. It is clearly a step forward from this to the “troublesome” chronicles which were the immediate forerunners of Shakespeare’s histories. The admixture of the foreign element and of classical influence in the evolution of the chronicle drama is comparatively very small. But the type serves as a valuable link between the development of comedy and the development of tragedy.

Another important link was the strong taste for the plays of Seneca and for Italian versions of one or two of the plays of Euripides, which set in about the middle of the sixteenth century. Seneca appealed strongly to the Italians as a famous bridge between the greater models of Greek antiquity and the more facile ideals of the Renaissance, and a taste for Seneca must rank high in the list of Italian novelties which the English scholars of the sixteenth century were so proud of importing from the Transalpine peninsula. The rising confraternity of critics (it is hardly an exaggeration to say) would not look at a serious play unless it were modelled upon an Italian design, and by preference an Italian adaptation from Seneca or one of the remoter stars of antiquity. Early in Elizabeth’s reign Seneca’s *Tenne Tragedies* were successively translated into English by five scholars—Neville, Nuce, Studley, Jasper Heywood, and John Newton—and collected in a single volume by the last-mentioned in 1581. Long before this the direct influence of Seneca upon English drama was shown in the first English tragedy, entitled *Gorboduc*, which was acted on Twelfth Night, 1561, by gentlemen of the Inner Temple before Queen Elizabeth. *Gorboduc* (printed 1565, and again in 1571 as *Ferrex and Porrex*) was a joint production, being the work of Thomas Norton (1532—1584), a London, Cambridge, and Inner Temple man, who married a daughter of Cranmer’s, and though successful at the Bar, gave much attention to literature, in conjunction with Thomas Sackville, afterwards Lord Buckhurst, author of the stately *Induction to The Mirror for Magistrates* (1559-63); Sackville wrote the last two acts, and perhaps revised the whole. The plot of *Gorboduc* was derived from a British legend of the King Lear variety, to be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s History; but the management of it is thoroughly Senecan. The action is not represented on the stage, but is reported by professional messengers or eye-witnesses, after the Greek fashion. As a

substitute for it, we have a dumb-show before each act, signifying allegorically the nature of the events to follow, and finally there is a chorus of four sage men of Britain who comment upon the course of events at the close of each act. The external form of the piece, with its acts and scenes, choruses, stock characters, ghosts, and ghastly incidents reported—not enacted—is thus absolutely Senecan; while the moral is one grateful to Tudor ears, the curse of civil war and the horrors of a disputed succession. But one novel feature in *Gorboduc*, perhaps the most important of all, remains still to be noted.

Since the appearance of Trissino’s *Sophonisba* in 1515, the Italians had been increasingly given to combine prose and verse, tragic and comic effect, and rhyme with *blank verse*. The two English authors now, in their attempt to be completely faithful in form to their classical and Italian models, discarded the rhymed metre (generally twelve or fourteen-syllable couplets), which had hitherto been the sole dramatic vehicle, and adopted in its place the new blank verse which Surrey had but recently used, as we have seen, for his version of two books of Virgil’s *Æneid*, and which seemed to them, as to him, to be the one way of reproducing the unrhymed measures of Greece and Rome. The verse, like the texture of the play generally, is thoroughly wooden. There may be flesh and blood, as Charles Lamb remarked, if we could only get at it; but we can’t. Ligneous as the drama is, however, and as its immediate successors are, their importance as fixing the type for the drama of air and fire that was to come, and to which Marlowe was to lend the resonance of his “mighty line,” can hardly be overrated.

Having dealt so fully with *Gorboduc*, it will be necessary to do little more than enumerate its Senecan successors, such as *The Lamentable Tragedy mixed full of pleasant Mirth, conteyning the Life of Cambises, King of Persia, his many Wicked Deeds and Odious Death*, written in 1570 by Thomas Preston (1537—1598), another Cambridge man; the *Tancred and Gismunda*, by Robert Wilmot, played before the Queen at the Inner Temple, in 1568, the story again taken from the Italian and treated in the Italian manner; the *Promos and Cassandra* of George Whetstone (1544—1587), taken from the *Hecatommithi* of Cinthio and printed in 1578; the *Jocasta* of George Gascoigne, based on the

Italian version of the Euripidian *Phœnissæ*, by Ludovico Dolci, and written in blank verse much after the pattern of *Gorboduc*; and *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, produced before the Queen at Greenwich by eight members of Gray's Inn (of whom Francis Bacon was one) in February, 1588. Impossible from the point of view of intrinsic literary interest, these plays are all of an historical value as illustrating the final process by which English tragedy (which admittedly owed more to foreign examples than even comedy) was evolved from

mysteries and moralities through the transitional phase of chronicle-histories. The enumeration brings us to the threshold of the immediate predecessors of Shakespeare; to the mysterious ten years from 1580 to 1590, when the bats that flit about the twilight of the drama give place to the immediate harbingers of the mightiest dawn in all our literature.

In order to understand this marvellous transformation-scene we shall have to go for some assistance to the political and social history of the period.¹

¹ Among the more indispensable books for the study of the rise of the Drama in England are J. Payne Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, 1879; Dr. A. W. Ward's *English Dramatic Literature*, 1899; E. K. Chambers's *The Mediæval Stage*,* 1903; A. W. Pollard's *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes* (ed. 1904); Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*, 1903. In addition to these the student of the ancient English Drama will be anxious to consult Dodsley's *Collection of Old English Plays*, and the texts of the four great cycles of miracle plays, edited—the *York Plays*, by Lucy Toulmin Smith; the *Chester Plays*, by T. Wright; the *Towneley or Wakefield Plays*, by England and Pollard; and the *Ludus Coventriæ*, by Halliwell Phillipps. And references on the subject generally may also be given to Ten Brink's *History of English Literature* (Bell, vol. ii.), Jusserand's *Le Théâtre en Angleterre*, Davidson's *Studies in the English Miracle Plays* (1892), Courthope's *History of English Poetry* (vol. i.), Creizenach's *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, 1893, and K. L. Bates's *The English Religious Drama*, 1893, with a bibliography.

CHAPTER V

PRE-SHAKESPEAREAN DRAMA

"It is especially with reference to the drama and its characteristics in any given nation, or at any particular period, that the dependence of genius on the public taste becomes a matter of the deepest importance."—COLERIDGE, *Lectures*.

Actors and theatres—Lyly—Greene—Peele—Kyd—Marlowe—*Tamburlaine*—*Faustus*—*Edward II.*—*Arden of Feversham*.

THE marvellously rapid expansion of English life and literature in the middle of Elizabeth's reign is seen nowhere more clearly than in that exuberance of dramatic production which first made itself felt between 1580 and 1590. The famous writer of interludes, John Heywood, lived to the very threshold of this period, but the interludes themselves had long been superseded as an old-fashioned transitional form. Deeper still in oblivion were the moralities or allegorical plays from which the interludes had, in a sense, been evolved. Such plays lingered on, to be sure, in the country and among ruder town audiences, but in cultured circles they were quite eclipsed by novelties bearing the stamp of Italy or the classics. Comedies in Latin, French, Italian, and Spanish were thoroughly "raked," as Greene expressly declares, to furnish the playhouses of London. Between these admirers of classical models and the conservative audiences who loved the old medleys, there were, no doubt, some eclectics who aimed at creating a drama out of elements furnished by each of the other schools. Nearly all the attempts in the various kinds at the period have utterly disappeared. Those that have survived best are the most ambitious and the most experimental, such as Edwardes's *Damon and Pythias* and Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, and several plays by George Gascoigne. But although several of these are important historically, they are almost, without exception, dreary, sapless, and unexciting. In ten years' time, in the interval between the appearance of *The Shepheards Calender*, *Astrophel and Stella*, *Faustus*, and *The Jew of Malta*, what an extraordinary

change seems suddenly to have come over the landscape! The golden age of our literature has, in effect, suddenly set in; and this age is dominated by the romantic drama. By the close of Elizabeth's reign twelve theatres existed in London, where in 1558 not a single public playhouse could have been heard or even dreamed of. Dramatic poets sprang up by tens, and plays, many of which have taken their place in the world's literature, were written by fifties. How did this surprising literature so suddenly come into being? From a seemingly barren waste, how sprang up this chorus of song—a chorus so melodious that in poetry Elizabethan has almost become a synonym for sweet and tunable?

The more we study it the more clearly perhaps shall we discern the sharply cut characteristics which fitted this one age, of a small people in a small country to form the alembic of such a marvellous intellectual product as the drama of Shakespeare.

The sudden and unexpected character of the development might be compared with the blossoming period of Athenian literature in the generation that followed that of Themistocles. It was an age of resistance to external pressure, and the extraordinary success of Henry VIII. and of his daughter Elizabeth in affirming national independence in every way, both in secular and also in religious matters, can hardly have failed greatly to exhilarate that instinct of national identity and national pride which the whole trend of circumstances in the closing years of the fifteenth century had contributed to prepare. Free in respect to mind, body, and

estate to an extent rarely, if ever, attained before or since, Englishmen were all the time, politically speaking, under a despotism. They had no hand whatever in steering the ship of State. Such a combination has ever been favourable to the emergence of great writers.

The time was one of daring expansion and of vehement utterance. England had thrown off its old insularity and was looking outwards into the world; its vision was not yet blurred and narrowed by Puritanism. The national genius was craving for popular literary expression. The overwhelming popularity of the stage pointed superior minds to the conquest of the Drama, where the conflict seemed to lie between the popular drama, which was not literary, and the literary drama, which was not popular. As a whole the playgoers, with Queen Elizabeth at their head, were demanding situation-plays with ingenious devices from Italian novels, spiced with plenty of native English wit, and with a large infusion of jiggling and clownage. Of the vast majority of plays produced under these influences before 1588 we know little or nothing. The names of some of them have survived, but most of them have perished utterly. The playwright then did not mind mixing tragedy with comedy, prose with verse, town with country, kings with clowns. He set at naught the unities of classical and Aristotelian tradition. Sidney and his scholarly friends laughed at the absurdities of the popular theatre. They eschewed rhyme, and hoped to be able to bring hexameter into general use. They sighed after Terence, Italy, and Seneca, and wished to have tragedy, comedy, and pastoral carefully discriminated with a due observance of the unities of time and place—such a development, in fact, as led in France to the declamatory drama of Racine. The bulk of the playgoing public cared for none of these things. They preferred the rhyme of *King Cambises* to the blank verse of *Gorboduc*. They liked their playwrights to leap lightly over great intervals of time and space, and thought themselves “ill-provided if they were not taken within the space of two hours from Genesis to the Day of Judgment.” The public, indeed, were ready to follow a dramatic author of vigorous imagination wherever he desired to lead them. These were the circumstances in which great leaders and innovators responded to the nation’s literary need, and in which

during the years between 1579 and 1589 such amazing strides were made.

At the same time another influence of the greatest possible importance was in operation—a change, namely, in the condition of the theatre by the growth of a class of habitual spectators and of professional performers.

The details of the transformation are not recoverable; but it is clear that during the generation that preceded 1580 the permanent stage gradually discarded the homely properties of the movable platform; the hall or inn-yard is superseded by the regular theatre; the servitor or strolling minstrel by the professional player; the morality, comic or serious, by comedy and tragedy; and the clerk or court poet, who wrote interludes, by the professional dramatist or playwright.

The old-fashioned moralities were played by roving companies, at first in open spaces or inn-yards, afterwards in the banqueting-halls of nobles. Early, however, in Henry VIII.’s reign, or even before 1509 in some cases, the great nobles began to attach permanent troupes of players (by origin choristers) to their households.

In the early days of Elizabeth the principal companies of these trained actors were Lord Leicester’s, Lord Warwick’s (afterwards Lord Hunsdon’s), and Lord Clinton’s (afterwards known as the Earl of Sussex’s men). In addition to the adult performers (all of whom were men) there were troupes of boy-actors, composed of the choirs of the Chapel Royal and St. Paul’s. When not playing at court or the houses of their patrons, these companies as a rule made use of inn-yards, such as the Bell and Cross Keys in Gracechurch Street, the Bull in Bishopsgate, or the Belle Savage on Ludgate Hill. Leicester’s influence with the Queen enabled him in 1574 to procure for his “servants” a royal patent empowering them to perform within the City of London and throughout the realm, provided that their plays were licensed by the Master of the Revels. But the company was to meet with strenuous opposition to the exercise of these privileges. The Corporation of London was the determined enemy of the stage, on the double ground of the immorality of many of the performers and their productions, and the peril of contagion in time of plague. Accordingly in 1576 it issued an order that no theatrical performances should be given in public within

the city bounds. This order led to a prolonged contest between the Corporation and the Privy Council, which had a highly important result. The players, relying on the favour of the court, yet not daring openly to defy the authority of the Lord Mayor, established themselves in permanent buildings just beyond the boundaries of the city. Here they were outside the jurisdiction of the Corporation, and yet close enough to the town to permit of both the citizens and the court gallants being present at their performances. An early dinner over, the pleasure-seekers of the day would stroll down to the Strand to see what flags were flying across the river; then, having made their selection, they would cross the Thames in a veritable armada of row-boats for the entertainment houses of Bankside. The temporary structure in the inn-yard had given place to permanent buildings in the suburbs, such as the houses of Shoreditch (the Theater and the Curtain, 1576-7), of Bankside, Southwark (the Rose, 1592; the Hope, the Swan; the Globe, built 1599), and of Newington Butts; in addition to which there was the Blackfriars. The stage had passed from a nomadic to a settled condition.

Before the end of the sixteenth century, at a time when Paris had but a single playhouse, London was girdled with theatres, of which the most famous were the Fortune, near Cripplegate, and the Globe. In these playhouses a medley of influences, made up of the practice of the itinerant stage, the learning of the universities and the Inns of Court, the pictorial and scenic effects aimed at in the court masks and pageants, were focussed in a common centre. The "thronging" audiences were composed of all classes, so that the dramatist had to take account of various and often conflicting tastes in the composition of his play.

As for the theatres themselves, the best of them were simple wooden buildings, round or hexagonal in shape—Shakespeare's "wooden O." Some of the smaller theatres were roofed in, but the larger ones stood open to the air. The performances took place, roughly speaking, between two and five in the afternoon—in the summer, during which the companies travelled from town to town, probably rather later; but in the absence of long "waits," a five-act play and an after-piece, or "jig," were easily compressed into two and a quarter hours, "the two hours'

traffic of our stage." Performances at court were ordinarily given in the evening, and with a greatly enhanced splendour of *mise-en-scène*. The public theatres advertised on posts and in booksellers' shops. A flag marked the day of a performance, and when all was ready a trumpet sounded, and the play began. Playgoers who could afford the luxury were accommodated with stools upon the stage; others might take boxes or rooms, just above the heads of the groundlings standing in the circular space of the yard. Scenery, in the modern sense, was almost wholly lacking, but costly properties were not uncommon. A "traverse" or curtain of drapery drawn upon a rod from the centre was at the rear of the stage. The stage itself projected apron-wise into the pit or courtyard, so that the actors were brought close to the spectators beneath and around them. At the back of the front stage was a shallow rear stage, which could be partitioned off by means of the "traverse"; above was a balcony or gallery. Distinguished visitors occasionally occupied part of this, but it was also used by the actors. On this gallery stood the citizens who held parley with King John and Philip Augustus. To this balcony was Antony drawn up. On it stood Juliet when she bade farewell to Romeo upon her wedding night. Pieces were acted continuously—no waits—and deep and shallow, located and unlocated scenes, were as far as possible alternated. No actresses appeared upon the English boards¹ and all female parts were played by boys. Trained boys were in great demand, and were bought and sold like expert footballers at the present day. Coryat was surprised at Venice to find that women could sustain female parts almost, if not quite, as well as these "scrubby" boys. But, generally speaking, in comparison with the home product, the foreign theatres were "beggarly." The incidental songs and music were excellent; the dresses were choice; the lack of scenery was compensated by an amplitude of action and phraseology, just as the lack of programmes was supplied by placards. The "poet" in Ben Jonson's time got "ten pound the play," in addition sometimes to forty shillings for a dedication if the play were printed; but this was seldom done with the company's consent, so great was the fear of rival troupes getting hold of the text. As it was, a good stage-piece was often

¹ The only employment a woman could obtain in the theatre is said to have been that of "gatherer" at the entrance.

filched, either by means of stenographers sent to take down the play, or through the unscrupulous agency of impecunious actors. Occasionally, however, books of the play (the slender "quartos") were sold in the theatre for a few pence.

Then, as now, people crowded to witness a new play, especially when there was a chance of seeing in a new part such actors as Alleyn or Burbage, Will Kemp, or Nat Field. And while the players counted on the *bourgeoisie* for applause, they looked for a more discriminating approval from the nobles. The troupes were now noblemen's servants in name only, but many of the leading nobles were ardent connoisseurs of plays and acting, and courtiers of highest distinction (Southampton, Essex) contributed large sums to playhouse treasuries. The leading actors were profit-sharers, and, as will have been seen, they looked well after their business. There was indeed nothing amateurish about the Elizabethan stage. Coleridge's "naked room and a blanket" is somewhat *hors ligne* in a description of its bustling boards and full treasuries. Marvellous as was the development of dramatic art between the accession of the play-loving Elizabeth and 1588, the progress towards perfection in the matter of stage-craft was fully commensurate with it.

Research has done much to dissipate the dense haze which formerly hung over the eastern horizon of great drama in England. Of the precentors of the great dramatic chorus as a whole, there still remains much to be learned. Many plays have perished. Other striking dramas, such as *Arden of Feversham*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Edward III.*, are unprovided with authors. Five dramatists of the period, however, have emerged more or less completely from the twilight, each of whom has contributed a definite constructive feature to the building-up of the dramatic edifice—a pillar here, a window there, a portal outside. The only great name among them, that of Marlowe, is that of a mighty genius indeed, but of a genius undeveloped and rather poetic than purely dramatic. He contributed the spirit of poetic romance, the fire of intensity, the enthusiasm for new, grandiose, and revolutionary ideals and the vehicle of a sounding blank

verse. Next, Kyd contributed the element of melodramatic horror; Peele a pastoral sweetness in flowing blank verse, the honeyed cadences of which are not seldom echoed in Shakespeare; Greene, together with a harvesting of native drollery and folklore, a tradition of sweet, forgiving women and a verdure of English fields and hedgerows. After Marlowe, by his refining influence upon form, and his excellence in witty dialogue, lyrical interlude, and classical imagery, no one contributed more perhaps than John Lyly. We shall deal with these predecessors of Shakespeare in a reverse order to that in which we have just enumerated them, commencing with Lyly.

John Lyly entered Magdalen College, Oxford, at the beginning of 1569 at the age of sixteen, his father being, it is surmised, a man of Kent, and son of the famous grammarian, William Lyly or Lilly. He graduated B.A. in April, 1573, M.A. 1575, and probably settled in London in the Savoy four or five years later. His first work, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit*, was published at the close of 1578, and the sequel entitled *Euphues and his England* came out fifteen months later, about March, 1580. At this time he seems to have been private secretary to the Earl of Oxford, who first suggested to him the writing of plays for the court. Oxford was at the time Lord High Chamberlain, and he must have been gratified at the success with which his *protégé* adapted classical and mythological themes to the flattery of their royal mistress. Lyly's ambition for years was to obtain the post of Master of the Revels at court, but hope was persistently frustrated.

Of his eight plays, *Campaspe* may be termed an historical play; *Mother Bombe* is a comedy of contemporary life with a Terentian plot; *Sapho*, *Endymion*, and *Midas* are mythological comedies of the court; while the remaining three, *Galathea*, *Love's Metamorphosis*, and *The Woman in the Moon*, are pastoral comedies approaching the form of masques. In *Campaspe*, which was probably produced in 1580, history was first treated in an imaginative way for the stage. The prose in which the play is written has a good deal of animation in it, its chief defect being lack of passion.¹

¹ The chief authority for *Campaspe* is a passage in Pliny's *Natural History*, Book XXXV. It was printed in 1584. The story of *Galathea* was suggested by Ovid. It was probably written about 1584 and printed in 1592. *Sapho and Phao* was based on Ovid's *Epistles*, and was probably written about 1581 and printed in 1584. *Endymion*, an allegorical pastoral, may have been written in 1579, but has also been assigned to the year 1584-5. As to the meaning of the allegory, the opinions of experts, such as Halpin, Baker, Bond, J. D. Wilson, and Feuillerat, are in conflict.

In *Endymion* he ventured on a daring transcription of the history of the reign, and in *Midas* embodies the national sense of triumph over Philip of Spain. From Lyly's witty, sprightly, and mocking girls Shakespeare took a number of hints for his picture gallery. Lyly wrote his *Pappe' with a Hatchet* in September, 1589. In 1601 he wrote a second despairing petition to the Queen for some adequate reward for his years of service. At the close of the reign he appears to have sat in Parliament more than once for the borough of Aylesbury. He is known to have had children and debts, but seems to have obtained little satisfaction from the Queen. The register of St. Bartholomew-the-Less records Lyly's burial on November 30th, 1606, being then fifty-two years of age. A good epitaph for him would have been that phrase in *Euphues*: "I have ever thought so superstitiously of wit that I fear I have committed idolatry against wisdom." His six court comedies were printed in 1632, and *Euphues* as late as 1718; but after that it disappeared from the English press for 150 years.

Original in form, refined in manner, purged of all the earthliness of the old vernacular drama, Lyly's plays are miracles of quip, quirk, antithesis, pun, conceit, simile, pleasant allusion, and verbal fence. They were acted at the court, where the author was able to gratify to the full his taste for erudite allusion and curious expression. Sidney and his erudite friends, inimical to *Euphues* though they were, might appreciate them. Human interest, dramatic situation, characterisation, emotion—they have none! The plays of Lyly have the form of true comedy, but not its substance; they are as unsubstantial as the moonbeams extracted from cucumbers which Gulliver saw in Laputa. In formal respects, however—and form in the drama goes for much—they exhibit a striking originality. Putting aside Gascoigne, Lyly was the first to write prose comedy in England; he was also the first to write comedy that ignored the gross popular taste, clear of the old English tradition, and depending on æsthetic and intellectual qualities alone. He bequeathed a taste in repartee and witty retort to Shakespeare himself, and the characteristics of Lylyan dialogue are aptly summed up by Shakespeare in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "a fine volley of words, gentlemen, and quickly shot off."

Robert Greene was born at Norwich about 1560, graduated at Cambridge (St. John's) in 1579, and then, according to his own account, went abroad. After some roystering and dissolute adventures in France and Spain, he returned to England about 1580. Five years later he married, but, after spending the marriage portion, left wife and child and settled in London. There he was joined by his friend Thomas Nash, and supported himself by his flowing pen until his final or death-bed "repentance" in August, 1592. He died on September 3rd, and was buried "in the new churchyard by Bethlehem Hospital." In later life he accused himself of a great variety of crimes; but his works are singularly free from immorality or grossness, and, in the absence of better evidence, we may well doubt if Greene was a man of inherently vicious character, and not merely an easily led and reckless pleasure-seeker of notoriously irregular life. Except that he possessed a lyric gift of a high order, his resemblance to Villon may be taken to be slight. In the affairs of this world, indeed, Greene seems to have been as improvident, as feckless, and as inconsiderate as a little child. In literature he achieved a reputation in the first place for his journalistic industry and lightning rapidity; both the faculty and the imperative need for scribbling remained with him to the end. He made copy out of his spells of sottishness, out of his neglect of his wife, and even out of his last illness. In 1588 he attacked Marlowe for his "drumming" blank verse; and on his death-bed, in his *Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592) he bitterly reproached Shakespeare with being a low actor and poacher upon the preserves of the old college wits, who thinks himself, forsooth, the only Shakescene in the country. Yet Greene's faculty for spontaneous production both in prose and verse was brilliant, and spasmodic and fragmentary though his literary output may be, we cannot fail to regard him with interest as one of the men, if not of genius, at any rate of exuberant literary vigour and vitality, who straightened the way for the great romantic movement in Elizabethan England. Greene was a bright and spontaneous lyricist, and a most industrious novelist and pamphleteer. His plays are not known to have exceeded six in number: *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, written in collaboration with Thomas Lodge in 1587-8, and printed in 1594; *Alphonsus, King*

of *Aragon*, a ranting imitation of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, written in 1588 and printed in 1599; *Historie of Orlando Furioso*, based on Ariosto (xxii.), written in 1588 and printed in 1594; *The Honourable Historie of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, written in 1589 and printed in 1594; *The Scottish Historie of James IV.*, based partly on a tale of Cinthio's, with a curious chorus prelude introduced by Oboram, King of Fairies, and a quaint clown, Slipper, written in 1590 and printed in 1598; and *George-a-Greene, the Pinner of Wakefield*, a Robin Hood and Edward I. drama, written about 1590-91 and printed in 1599. One of these only need arrest our attention.

The Honourable Historie of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay was probably produced in emulation of Marlowe's *Faustus*. Both plays deal with the very ancient fable (to go back no farther than Simon Magus) of a compact made by a man with the Evil One, Marlowe basing his play upon the German Faust-book of 1587, Greene upon a prose tract (of which no early copy is known) dealing with the legendary history of Friar Bacon (i.e. Roger Bacon of Oxford), his magic crystal, his brazen head, and scheme for encircling England with a wall of brass. If we conclude that *Faustus* was written in the autumn of 1588, we may safely assume that *Friar Bacon* was produced about six months later. There is, however, no question of imitation, the two plays being worked out on entirely different lines. Marlowe's play looks forward to the terror that Shakespeare inspired in *Macbeth*; Greene looks backward to the old morality, with its well-worn buffooneries. It is one of the last pieces in which the devil appeared in *propria persona* upon the London stage, and the magical incidents are all described not only without the least semblance of a shudder, but with the greatest possible joviality and gusto. Upon the original legend Greene engrafts a medley thoroughly typical of his quaint English humour and versatile talent.

George Peele (whose fondness for Devonshire comparisons in his plays suggests a Devonshire origin) was the son of a clerk of Christ's Hospital, and was educated at that school, whence he proceeded to Broadgates Hall, now

Pembroke College, Oxford, where Heywood also had studied. He migrated, however, and graduated B.A. from Christ Church in 1577. Four years later he left Oxford for London, and at first turned his graceful pen to the production of literary tributes and compliments in return for stipulated fees.¹ This source of income running dry, he abandoned himself, despite the warnings of his friend Greene, to write for the common players. He resembled Greene in some respects, and Greene wrote of him in his *Groatsworth* as a fellow-sinner. His life does not appear to have been in any sense a counterpart of his sweet and innocuous poetry. He was often put to humorous shifts for the bare means of subsistence, and he died distressfully in or about 1597. Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598), ascribes a disgraceful death to him. Some eight years afterwards his notoriety suggested a label for a compilation of extravagant and somewhat musty practical jokes (in some of which a suspicious likeness may be detected to anecdotes of François Villon), styled *Merrie conceited Jestes of George Peele, gentleman, some time a Student in Oxford*.

A pastoral play by Peele, *The Arraignment of Paris*, was written about 1581-2 and published in 1584. The idea of the play is the trial of Paris for error of judgment in giving the apple to Venus. Composed for the delectation of the court, it contended that in merit the ball belonged to one Eliza, who ruled over (says Diana)—

A kingdome that may well compare with mine
An ancient seat of kings, a second Troy,
Y-compassed round with a commodious sea.

In his earlier work, Peele's blank verse is ordinarily dash'd and brew'd with rhyme; yet he managed to get more music out of the metre than any earlier dramatist had done. His rhymed verse is sweet and caressing if somewhat monotonous. Beautiful songs now and again rise to the surface; in the third act of *The Arraignment*, for instance, where occurs—

Fair and fair and twice so fair,
And fair as any may be,
The fairest shepherd on our green,
A love for any ladye.

The dramatic work (if any) done by Peele

¹ Some of his later occasional and complimentary poems are exquisitely graceful, and illustrate a remarkable deftness in smooth blank verse rhythm by no means devoid of dignity. *Polyhymnia*, written to celebrate one of the annual coronation day tilting matches (November 17th) and published in 1590, concludes some majestic lines with the noble irregular sonnet "His golde locks time hath to silver turn'd."

between 1582 and 1590 remains to be identified. In the latter year he produced *The Old Wives' Tale*, printed five years later (1595), a strange, incoherent, and unmannerly medley, impossible as drama but interesting to the antiquary and the folk-lorist; interesting, too, by reason of its induction, its quaint tags of song, its supposed ridicule of Gabriel Harvey and his hexameters in the part of Huanebango, and its suggestions to Milton.¹ An eerie glimmer of romantic humour seems to be trying to percolate the dark aisles of what is not so much a play as a pathless, plotless, and almost impenetrable forest. In 1599, a year or so after his death, was printed Peele's best-remembered play, *David and Bethsabe*. Peele's two editors differ in their estimate of *David and Bethsabe* ("beloved of German critics"). Dyce calls it Peele's *chef d'œuvre*; Bullen describes it as a mess of cloying sweets. It was very popular, but perhaps this was due to curiosity to witness Absalom swinging from a tree by his long hair (a suspension which cost manager Henslowe the sum of 1s. 6d. in ropes and pulleys). Both as regards smooth versifying and treatment of religious themes (often recalling the obsolete miracle poetry) a resemblance may be traced between Peele and Clement Marot, whose *Psaumes* were published in 1541-3. Peele's honeyed cadences may to a slight extent have modulated the verse-manner of Shakespeare during the early period from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to *Romeo and Juliet*; but, upon the whole, he contributed less to dramatic progress in England than either Lyly, Greene, or Marlowe.

Thomas Kyd, the son of Francis Kyd, a scrivener, was baptised at St. Mary Woolnoth's, in Lombard Street, on November 6th, 1558. He was sent to Merchant Taylors' and educated above his profession of scrivener, which he soon deserted for literature. His accession to the ranks of professional writers, as usual, excited some jealousy, and Nash wrote in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon* of those who, leaving the trade of *Noverint* whereto they were born, busy themselves with the endeavours of art, pose as English Senecas, attempt Italian translations or twopenny pamphlets, and blotch up a blank verse with ifs and ands. Of all these offences Kyd was guilty, although his blank verse is

undeserving of such summary condemnation, and marks an advance on earlier efforts. But it was as a tragedian of blood that "sporting Kyd," as he was ironically called, achieved his widespread fame. In or about 1588 he produced a play before which the popularity of even Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* paled. It was licensed in 1592 as *The Spanish Tragedie*, dealing with the pitiful fate of Old Hieronymo, who goes well nigh stark mad ere, in anticipation of Hamlet, he converts the stage into a shambles in the prosecution of his "revenge"; the first extant edition is dated 1594, and another edition appeared in 1604, with extensive additions at the hand of Ben Jonson. Like *Titus Andronicus*, *The Spanish Tragedie* was a tale of horrors, in what we should now call transpontine taste, and, although it excited the enthusiasm of the vulgar, it was derided by the more cultured of its critics. The wits were fond of parodying it, and the strange soliloquy of the hero, "Beware, Ieronymo, go by, go by," became a regular catchword. A similar expression greatly in request among theatre-goers was "Hamlet, revenge!" the quotation being from a pre-Shakespearean play on the subject of the Prince of Denmark. Now in the prefatory Epistle, or Satire, which Nash contributed to his friend Greene's *Menaphon* in 1589, Nash makes the enigmatic remark in the course of a diatribe against Kyd that this dramatist could an he would furnish "whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches." This looks very much as if Kyd were the author, or at least the reputed author, of this original *Hamlet*, written some twelve years before Shakespeare's great tragedy, probably about 1588. The resemblance between the *motif* of two such extraordinarily popular plays as *The Spanish Tragedie* and *Hamlet* is at any rate remarkable. Like *Hamlet*, the *Tragedie* represents an action of cruel and cold-blooded murder followed by a long-harped-on and sanguinary revenge. A ghost appears in both; in both the revenge is effected by means of a play within a play. Upon the same grounds the *Tragedie* resembles Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, in emulation of which play Prof. Courthope thinks it was probably written.

Born on February 6th, 1564, the eldest son of a shoemaker at Canterbury, Marlowe² received

¹ Sacrapant and Delia in this play being the originals of Milton's Comus and Lady.

² He was christened at St. George's Church, Canterbury, February 26th, 1563-4, some two months before Shakespeare's baptism at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, John Marlowe, appears to have been the

the rudiments of his education at the King's School in that city, which he entered at Michaelmas, 1578, and where he had as fellow pupils Richard Boyle, afterwards known as the Great Earl of Cork, and Will Lyly, the brother of the dramatist. Stephen Gosson entered the same school a little before and William Harvey, the famous physician, a little after Marlowe. He subsequently went to Cambridge with a Parker scholarship from his school, and took his degree from Benet College (now Corpus Christi) in 1584. His classical acquirements were of a kind which was then extremely common, being based for the most part upon a minute acquaintance with Roman mythology as revealed in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His spirited translation of Ovid's *Amores*, which was at any rate commenced at Cambridge, does not seem to point to any very intimate acquaintance with the grammar and syntax of the Latin tongue. Before 1587 he seems to have quitted Cambridge for London, where he attached himself to the Lord Admiral's company of actors under the leadership of Edward Alleyn, and almost at once began writing for the stage. Of Marlowe's career in London, apart from his four great theatrical successes, we know hardly anything. The licentious character of some of the young dramatist's tirades seems to have early sown a suspicion among the strait-laced that his morals left everything to be desired. It is probable enough that this attitude of reprobation drove a man of so exalted a disposition as Marlowe into a more insurgent attitude than he would have otherwise adopted. He seems to have dallied with Unitarian opinions, which were then regarded as putting a man outside the pale of civilised humanity, and the Privy Council were just on the eve of investigating some depositions against him when his career was abruptly and somewhat scandalously terminated. It appears that he surprised a woman whom he loved in the arms of his low-born rival, who is described as a serving-man. Carried away by anger, he drew his dagger with a view of making an end of his supplanter, but his adversary, a man of more muscle and greater agility, seized the blade, reversed it, and plunged

it into his eye. This lamentable affray took place on June 1st, 1593, in a low tavern¹ at Deptford, in the register of the parish church of St. Nicholas in which town (where the poet sought refuge from the plague then raging in London) appears the following entry: "Christopher Marlowe, slain by Francis Archer."

A few months before the end of his life there is reason to believe that he transferred his services from the Lord Admiral's to Lord Strange's company, and was thus brought into direct communication with Shakespeare, who owed not a little, as we shall see, to the influence of his gifted predecessor.

To no single man does our drama owe more than to this ill-starred genius. It was he who determined the form which tragedy and history were permanently to assume. It was he who first clothed both in that noble and splendid garb which was ever afterwards to distinguish them. It was he who gave the death-blow to the old rhyme-plays on the one side and to the frigid and classical unrhymed plays on the other. Before him the dramatist had found himself in this dilemma: he had either been divorced from poetry altogether or had been wedded to the fettering monotony of rhyme. Marlowe freed the fraternity from this Caudine Forks of which they felt the irksomeness without being able to discover the means of deliverance.

Marlowe's first play was *The Tragedy of Tamburlaine the Great*, produced at the close of 1587 and printed in 1590. Its avowed object was to revolutionise the drama, and its immediate effect has been compared to that produced by *Götz von Berlichingen* or *Hernani*, only in this case the war which Victor Hugo declared against classicism Marlowe declared against the

Jigging veins of rhyming mother wits
And such conceits as Clownage keeps in pay.

He astonished and alarmed old prejudices; he raised a violent storm among the critics against what they called "the swelling bombast of his bragging blank verse." It is true that a kind of blank verse had already been used in a limited number of plays (e.g. *Gorboduc*, *Jocasta*, and *The Woman in the Moon*); but it had not been

grandson of John Morley or Marlowe, a substantial tanner of Canterbury. He married on May 22nd, 1561, Catherine, daughter of Christopher Arthur, at one time rector of St. Peter's, Canterbury, who had been ejected by Queen Mary as a married minister.

¹ Another version says that the *rixe* was a gambling affair and took place on board the *Golden Hind*, Drake's ship returned from encompassing the globe, and moored off Deptford as a popular draw, hired out to refreshment caterers.

so used on the popular stage, and even at the private houses where it had been used it had been employed in such a lifeless, formal, and mechanical way as to give no idea to any one that it could possibly have a future before it. It was the genius of Marlowe as displayed in *Tamburlaine* which transformed it at a single stroke into the noblest and most flexible of English metres. But the prejudices and the criticisms were soon dispersed before the gust of passion which Marlowe had infused into the drama. There was that in his diction and in his metre which proved irresistible to audiences so alive to new impressions as those of that day. Marlowe was recognised as the reigning dramatist of his day, and the cause of the drumming blank verse was won.

The faults of *Tamburlaine*, it must be admitted, are both many and conspicuous. Like all works which react powerfully against tendencies of long standing, it is marked by a violence which is often crude and excessive. It has the defects of the revolutionary spirit; it is too sonorous, *over-rhetorical*; it is fierce, savage, raucous, and blatant. It displays an immense canvas on which all the figures are superhuman, while that of *Tamburlaine* himself towers like a giant in proportions of audacious impossibility. In successive scenes the reader is transported from Persia to Scythia, from Scythia to Georgia, and from Georgia to Morocco. The author seems intoxicated, as it were, with the fumes of his invention. He outlines his theme in immense contours, while the figure of his hero moves through the piece like an avalanche. The diction is no less grandiose than the subject of the drama. Marlowe ransacks the continent for a picturesque name, and pours the wealth of an empire into the lap of a single epithet.

Yet with all this rant and extravagance we believe that it is no exaggeration to say after Mr. Verity that *Tamburlaine* contained more genuine poetry than all previous dramas put together, from the first miracle play down to the last piece of rhymed fustian that Nash or Peele or Kyd happened to have produced.

It would have seemed impossible for the author of *Tamburlaine* to eclipse a piece so sensational and so novel in popular estimation. It is, nevertheless, the case that in a second tragedy he succeeded in throwing into stronger

relief than ever his striking poetic genius, for his genius is essentially rather poetic than dramatic. Pre-eminently bold (it delighted him to “dally with interdicted subjects”) was his choice of material for his next play—the old story of the man’s contract with the devil. He found a fine setting of the old fable ready to his hand. The story had crystallised round Dr. Faustus, who flourished in Thuringia about 1520, and whose doings were narrated in a popular story-book or *Faustbuch* published at Frankfort in 1587. The play which Marlowe founded upon the English translation of this popular legend is, like *Tamburlaine*, a succession of scenes rather than an organised dramatic structure. Faustus sells his soul to the devil in order to obtain a limited power for the space of twenty-four years, together with the services of one of Satan’s lieutenants, Mephistopheles. Master of the elements and of all the forces of nature, he travels hither and thither about the globe, performing every kind of miracle. He goes to Rome, attends a banquet which is being given by the Pope, and, having assumed invisibility, snatches the dainties from the Pontiff’s plate, and, when Papa crosses himself, boxes his ears. He plays similar tricks with friars and scholars, with the emperor, and with the princes of Germany. He then returns to his native Wittenberg, where he awaits his terrible fate in gradually intensifying anguish. He is revealed in his study with one bare hour to live.

The sublimity of the play is concentrated into this passage. At the close of it, upon the stroke of midnight, the demons enter to “bear him quick to hell.” The *dénouement*, though bordering upon the grotesque, is sustained by lines of the truest poetical inspiration. The mighty line of Marlowe is nobly exemplified in the whole of the passage commencing

‘See! see! where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament,

and ending with the terrible longing for annihilation which reaches the climax in ‘

O soul, be chang’d into little water drops,
And fall into the ocean, ne’er to be found.

The play is disfigured by buffooneries. Faust and Mephistopheles are practically the only characters. There is no Gretchen,¹ and of the opportunities for symbolism or for irony which

¹ “What has Margaret to do with Faust?” asked Lamb, loyal as ever to an old favourite. “A scene from Marlowe is worth Goethe’s whole play.”

the play affords comparatively little use is made. Yet there are passages in it, such as the famous apostrophe to Helen or the discovery by Mephistopheles of the real meaning of Hell, which attain to the high-water mark of English poetry.

The third of Marlowe's tragedies, *The Rich Jew of Malta*, was probably produced in 1589, and as a dramatic composition exhibits a considerable advance. It is not known where Marlowe derived the material for his play. Its plot is of an extremely elaborate kind. It has for its subject the hatred of a Jew against his Christian persecutors. The early scenes, in which Barabas is depicted gloating over his gems, "infinite riches in a little room," in terms that constitute the very poetry of avarice, are as fine as anything that Marlowe ever wrote. But the cumulation of horrors and the exaggeration of the Jew's character, in which the semblance of humanity is sacrificed for the ravings of a devil incarnate, tend gradually to neutralise the human interest of the play.

During the last two years of his career Marlowe was jointly responsible for two plays on the civil wars of the fifteenth century known as the *First and Second Contentions* "betwixt the two famous Houses of York and Lancaster," printed in 1594 and 1595 respectively, and generally regarded as rough preliminary drafts of the Shakespearean dramas now known as the Second and Third Parts of *King Henry VI.* But Marlowe's greatest, and probably his last, effort in the direction of the chronicle drama was an unaided one. The noteworthy play entitled *The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England: with the tragicall fall of proud Mortimer*, was registered for publication in July, 1593,¹ less than two months after Marlowe's death. As in the case of Shakespeare's historical plays, the facts are taken from Holinshed, with an occasional reference for a detail to Stow and Fabyan, and the chronology is severely compressed in order to enhance the dramatic effect. Structurally, this play is far superior to the skimble-skamble chronicles that had hitherto encumbered the English stage, and it forms a keystone of the arch of our historical drama. Its influence is very marked upon the *Richard II.* of Shakespeare and the other historical plays of that period. But it must be admitted that Marlowe lost almost more than he gained by his novel

restraint in regard both to diction and structure. The play is almost wholly lacking in the lyrical fervour and extravagance of his earlier productions—though the old Marlowesque vein is seen now and again, especially in some of the earlier speeches of Gaveston (whose sinister influence forms the staple of the plot) and in the extreme physical horror of the ending—a foretaste of the most terrible kind of realism. The clownage which had been a foible of Marlowe's is altogether excluded. The result, unfortunately, is only to emphasise Marlowe's very defective powers of dynamic characterisation (the character of Isabella here, for instance, is wholly incoherent). The superiority of *Richard II.* in human and psychological interest is no less marked than the immense superiority of Shakespeare as a poet in the delicacy, subtle sadness, and rhythmical charm of those magnificent soliloquies in the closing acts of *Richard*, which have no counterpart whatever in the sheer animal distress of Edward.

When all is said, however, *Edward II.* remains a pioneer work of a very noble design, and, as Schelling well remarks, "may be considered the final evolution of the tragic type of the English chronicle play."

What separates Marlowe from Shakespeare is his inability to individualise his characters. But there are not wanting indications in *Edward II.* which render it conceivable that, had he lived beyond his twenty-nine years, he might have stood second only to Shakespeare—far below him in humour and in power to depict men and women—yet possibly supreme in a different province of dramatic art. As it was, he was "the herald who dropped dead in announcing the victory, the fruits of which he was not to share."

The vivid success which attended the tragedies of Kyd and Marlowe gave the signal for the appearance of a very remarkable group of domestic tragedies in which the poetic element was wholly subordinated to the luridly realistic. These plays were based directly upon incidents which had occupied the pens of the Tyburn chroniclers of the period. Thus, on the murder of a London merchant near Shooter's Hill in 1573 was founded the anonymous tragedy of *A Warning for Fair Women*. On a murder of peculiar atrocity which occurred in Thames Street, Robert Yarrington founded his *Two Tragedies in One*. On the murder of two

¹ Quartos, 1594 and 1598.

children by their father at Calverley, in Yorkshire, was founded *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, which appeared at the Globe in 1608, and was afterwards printed under the name of Shakespeare. The most famous of the group is the play based upon the murder of a Kentish gentleman in Edward VI.'s reign and entitled *Arden of Feversham*. In this play, which was printed in 1592, the character of the victim Arden is drawn in a faint and somewhat wavering outline, but the characters of his wife Alice

and her lover Mosbie, who contrived the murder between them, are full of individuality, and appallingly true to life. The guilty fears and suspicions with which Mosbie is haunted, the delicate and complex shades of sentiment in Alice, and the despairing passion by which she is consumed, reveal the work of a master in the delineation of character. The author, whoever he was, was the first to depict a complex woman character upon the tragic stage.¹

¹ Works upon the early Elizabethan Drama have been greatly multiplied during the last fifteen years. To Dr. A. W. Ward's *English Dramatic Literature*, J. P. Collier's *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, and J. A. Symonds's *Predecessors of Shakespeare*, 1884, would now probably be added by general consent: F. S. Boas, *Shakspeare and his Predecessors*, 1896; Mezières, *Prédécesseurs et Contemporains de Shakespeare*, 3rd ed., 1881; F. G. Fleay, *Chronicle History of the London Stage*, 1890; Gayley, *Representative English Comedies*, 1903; Manly, *The Pre-Shakespearean Drama*, 1897; Schelling, *The English Chronicle Play*, 1902; and Jusserand, *Histoire Littéraire*, vol. ii. chap. v. Of Lyly (upon whom we are expecting an elaborate monograph by Prof. Feuillerat, of Rennes), the recognised edition is that by R. Warwick Bond (1902). Kyd is edited by Prof. F. S. Boas (1901); Greene by A. Dyce, Dr. Grosart, and Prof. Churton Collins (Clarendon Press); Peele and Marlowe by Dyce, both of whose editions, good though they are, have been superseded by those of A. H. Bullen. For Marlowe may be consulted, further, Ingram's *Christopher Marlowe*, 1904; A. W. Verity's *Marlowe's Influence on Shakespeare*, 1886; Churton Collins's *Essays and Studies*, 1895; Swinburne's Essay in *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Seccombe and Allen's *Age of Shakespeare*; *Fortnightly Review*, September—October, 1905. It is an amusing exercise and test of critical ingenuity to trace the theories of Elizabethan staging as originally constructed upon very slender data by Nathan Drake, Malone, and J. P. Collier, and reflected in the ingenious reconstructions of Philarète Chasles (*La Représentation d'une Pièce de Shakspeare en 1613*), through the conjectures of F. G. Fleay, J. A. Symonds, H. B. Wheatley, William Archer, E. Bapst, W. W. Greg, F. Reynolds (*Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging*), and Karl Mantzius (in his voluminous *History of Theatrical Art*), down to the elaborately circumstantial theories of the very latest German specialists, such as Dr. Brandl, Robert Prölss (*Altenglisches Theater*), and Cecil Brodmeier (*Die Shakespeare-Bühne*). As in the case with some Teutonic theories concerning Shakespeare's chronology and “Metrik,” zeal occasionally outruns discretion, but both zeal and discretion alike seem distanced by prodigious learning.

CHAPTER VI

SPENSER AND HIS SCHOOL

"See in your library whether you have Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. No English is easier to understand, richer or more flowing; nowhere is there such an assemblage of abundant fiction, blissful imaginations, and marvellous adventures. It is like soaring on the wings of a beautiful swan; this aerial and fantastic world seems Man's natural home. It is like Ariosto, but serious, tender, touching, exalted, Platonian. It resembles in nowise Shakespeare's rapid, tormented, and dazzling Fairyland; it is perfectly calm, bright, and sweet. I shall endeavour to show this delight of Imagination, this beautiful madness of sixteenth-century poetry to our modern public fed on physiological novels."—Taine, *Letters*.

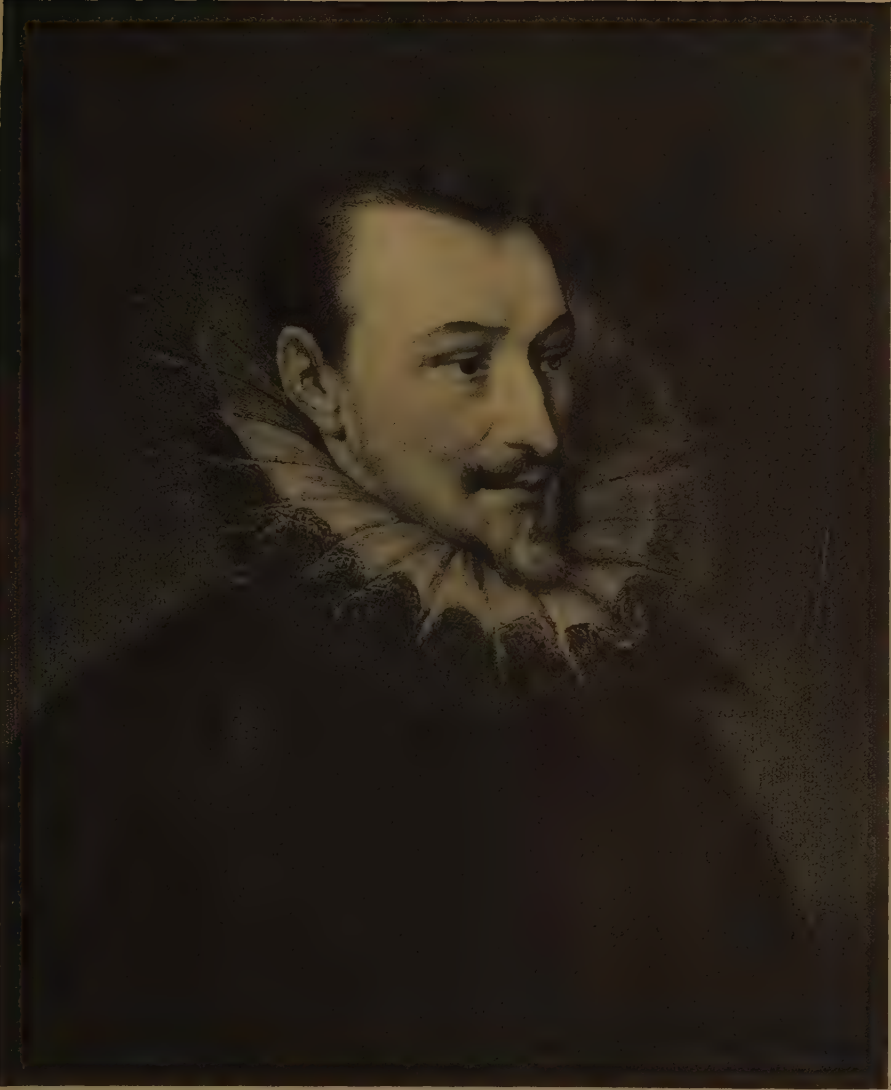
Rhyme or classical metres—Gabriel Harvey—Edward Dyer—Two great metrical innovations—Edmund Spenser—*The Shepherds Calender*—*The Faerie Queene*—Giles and Phineas Fletcher—Daniel—Drayton.

EVER since the "new learning" had begun to make way in England, English poetry had been mainly experimental and imitative. In the absence of any native literary tradition and of good and available English models, our writers had turned with a commendable humility to the reservoirs of the classics and to the more recent Italian masters. Wyatt and Surrey had followed the Italians; the more original Sackville had been influenced chiefly by Virgil. The writers of 1579 found themselves in the presence of developed literatures, with the formal perfection and maturity of which English literature could not bear comparison. They were oppressed by the superiority of Greek and Latin poetry; and in order to reproduce the merits of the classical poetry they thought that its prosody would first have to be resurrected. It would not have been so very surprising had the development of poetry in England been injured and retarded—as it was deplorably retarded in France—by a too timid devotion to these models of antiquity.

Between 1570 and 1580 it was actually being debated whether rhyme should not be altogether discarded, and English poetry written for the future in metres consecrated by Greek or Latin usage. The question of the adaptation of English to classical metres was first raised by Roger Ascham in his *Scholemaster* of 1570.

Thomas Drant, a Cambridge man of a later generation, translated Horace's *Satires* and his

Ars Poetica into classical metre, and when he died in 1578 left some elaborate posthumous rules whereby English might be twisted into quantitative measures such as sapphics and pentameters, but more especially hexameters. Ascham had found it absurd that such novices in poetry as the English should presume to follow the Goths in rhyming when they had before them the example of Homer and Virgil, the world's greatest poets, who knew not rhyme. William Webbe, the critic, likewise protested against "the tinkerly verse which we call rhyme," and the very lyrists themselves such as Thomas Campion denounced the practice as a concession to childish titillation. These various rules and admonitions were taken up very seriously by the group of poetical theorists who surrounded Sidney. Prominent among these were Gabriel Harvey and Sir Edward Dyer. Gabriel Harvey, a lecturer in rhetoric at Cambridge and author of various works in Latin, a man of genuine learning and not devoid of shrewdness and humour, is now mainly remembered for his devotion to this lost cause of classicism in English poetry. His counsels encouraged Sidney in the metrical experiments which diversified the *Arcadia*. The material service which he rendered to Spenser by introducing him to Sidney's circle at Penshurst entitles him to our gratitude. His attempts to convert Spenser to his classical theory of versification had no lasting success. The poet was too polite to say what he thought



Edmund Spenser

about the practicability of moulding English pronunciation to suit the exigencies of metre-mongers; but after 1580, in which year he commenced *The Faerie Queene*, he ceased all experiments in classical metres, and, revolting definitely against Harvey's theories, resolved to work out his salvation as a metrist by an exclusive reliance upon his own poetic instinct.

Yet the classical doctrine was not lacking in some confessors and martyrs not by any means wholly devoid of poetical faculty, among them Sir Edward Dyer, Abraham Fraunce, John Dickenson, and Richard Stanyhurst.

Edward Dyer was born at Sharpham Park, near Glastonbury, in a house which was subsequently the birthplace of Henry Fielding. Both at Oxford and the court he was early marked out for distinction. He was the close friend and acted in 1586 as the executor of Sir Philip Sidney. Three years later he went on an embassy to Denmark, was subsequently knighted and made Chancellor of the Garter, died unmarried in 1607, and was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark. Dyer was most highly reputed in his own day as poet, elegist, and staunch classicist, but he is remembered now exclusively by a single lyric.

Abraham Fraunce, a Salopian and St. John's, Cambridge, man, was emphatically a satellite of Sidney's, and one or two of his sonnets and other lyrics are included in the *Astrophel and Stella*. He also wrote *Arcadian Rhetoricke*,¹ and in 1591 issued *The Countess of Pembroke's Emmanuell*, an account of the Nativity in rhyming hexameters. This was followed by *The Countess of Pembroke's Yvy Church* (two parts, 1591-2), which contains versions from Tasso, from the *Æthiopian History* of Heliodorus, and from Watson's Latin poem of *Amyntas*. Fraunce's attempts vary in success from prettiness to the most ludicrous doggerel.

More thorough-going than Fraunce, though unable to attain to the high prosodical ideas of Drant, was Richard Stanyhurst (1547-1618), an Irish gentleman whose ambition was roused to avoid barbarous rhyming by Ascham's indication of what true poetic excellence was in a quotation from a no longer extant² version of the *Odyssey* in English hexameters:

All travellers do gladly report great praise of
Ulysses,
For that he knew many men's manners and saw
many cities.

Stanyhurst's translation of the first four books of Virgil's *Æneid* into English hexameters is justly considered one of the curiosities of English literature. Inspired with an "hexameter fury," wrote Nash in his preface to Greene's *Menaphon*, this Stanyhurst "recalled to life whatever hissed barbarism hath been buried this hundred years . . . a pattern whereof I will propound to your judgments as near as I can, being part of one of his descriptions of a tempest, which is thus:

"Then did he make heaven's vault to rebound with
rounce, robble hobble,
Of ruff raff roaring, with thwack thwack thurlery
bouncing."

John Dickenson in his *Shepherd's Complaint* and also in the verses interspersed in his *Arisbas, or Cupid's Journey to Hell*, a palpable imitation of *Euphues*, dated 1594, has recourse to classical metres, to hendecasyllabics, and to hexameters. While such experiments as these were occupying men's minds, while Webbe and Puttenham were descanting upon the elegance of verses shaped to the semblance of eggs and pillars, and when even a born lyrist such as Thomas Campion found it incumbent on him to denounce the vulgar and artificial custom of rhyming, the future of English poetry could hardly seem other than dark and perplexed; but little light was reflected on the past which could serve to illumine the future. From this impass English poetry was saved by two pieces of adaptation so striking and so successful as to rank among the highest of literary inventions. The first of these was Spenser's discovery of the stanza called after his name, an original modification and improvement of the Italian *ottava rima*, exceptionally fitted for the unwinding of romance, and adapted to show to the best advantage the melodious possibilities of English rhyme. The second was the adaptation of blank verse (which Surrey had attempted in his version of the *Æneid*) at the hands of Christopher Marlowe, before whom no one can be said to have realised even remotely the enormous possibilities of this unrhymed metre. The demand for English hexameters

¹ The *Arcadian Rhetoricke* is notable from the fact that though published in 1598, it cites passages from *The Faerie Queene*, none of which was published until two years later.

² By his friend M. Watson, of St. John's, Cambridge.

and sapphics, impracticable as it was, was thus not by any means wholly devoid either of meaning or of effect. It sprung from a sense of poverty in the old rhyming measures and led to the building up of forms of more complex beauty. More directly, though still for the most part unconsciously, it realised that for epic or serious dramatic poetry a real need for an unrhymed form of verse existed. This need, which was first expressed at Cambridge, gradually penetrated to the popular theatre, and the necessary relief from jiggling rhyme was effectually found in the mighty line of Marlowe.

Edmund Spenser was born at East Smithfield, probably in 1552. His father, John Spenser, was a clothier of Lancashire origin, and Edmund was sent when he was ten years old or thereabouts as a poor scholar to the newly founded Merchant Taylors' School; there he stayed till 1569, and had for his master the celebrated Dr. Mulcaster. In defiance of the classical prepossessions of the times, this distinguished scholar had the courage to say: "I love Rome, but London better; I favour Italy, but England more; I honour the Latin, but worship the English." The robust faith in the genius of his native tongue, which he derived from Mulcaster, may have enabled him to resist the heresies of his college friend, Gabriel Harvey, who became a fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, about a year after Spenser entered the Hall as a sizar in April, 1569. But Harvey's theories, erratic as they were, probably did more in the end to quicken and stimulate than definitely to mislead Spenser's taste for poetry. Harvey probably rendered considerable service to Spenser by introducing him to the Leicester House circle. Spenser, on his part, was not ungrateful, as he shows in his *Eclogues*, where Harvey is Hobbinol. A common friend at Cambridge was Edward Kirke, who subsequently edited *The Shepheards Calender*.

Spenser left Cambridge, after taking the degree of M.A., in 1576. Soon after this he returned from a sojourn in Lancashire by the express advice of Harvey. About 1578, probably, he took up his abode at Leicester House in the Strand, as a poet in the favourite's household. In December, 1579, his famous collection of pastorals, *The Shepheards Calender*, was published, and immediately established Spenser's reputation. Next year he was made

private secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, recently appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland. Spenser went over to Ireland in August, 1580, and took part in the reduction of the fort at Smerwick, where some six hundred Roman Catholics, mostly Spaniards, who had effected a hostile lodgment there, were slaughtered in cold blood. Lord Grey returned to England after this achievement, but Spenser remained on in Ireland, where his home was henceforth fixed, first in Dublin, and after 1588 at Kilcolman, where he bought, for a small sum, a forfeited estate, the castle in which he resided being an abandoned Peel-tower of the Desmonds. There he was visited by Raleigh, who urged him to bring to court the first three books of the fairyland romance which he was creating. He was presented to the Queen, published *The Faerie Queene* as far as it was completed in the spring of 1590, and in 1591, in answer to a good deal of grumbling about the hardships of his lot, and in spite of the opposition of Burleigh, received an annual pension of £50 from the Queen, with the informal title of "poet laureate." He returned to Ireland late in 1591, to resume his duties as Clerk to the Council of the province of Munster, which he resigned in June, 1594, upon his marriage in Cork Cathedral to Elizabeth Boyle, of an old Anglo-Irish family—the lady celebrated in the beautiful but somewhat artificial sonnets called *Amoretti*. He was in England again towards the end of 1595 bearing the MSS. of the fourth, fifth, and sixth books of *The Faerie Queene*. During 1596 he remained in London writing his drastic prose treatise called *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, embodying an uncompromising plan for the thorough subjugation of that rebellious country: his plan was not adopted, and when he returned to Kilcolman in 1597, he found to his cost that rebellion was still rife. Breaking into a flame in October, 1598, it took Spenser, the newly appointed Sheriff of county Cork, entirely by surprise. The castle, with one of the children in it, was burnt over his head, and he fled for refuge to Cork. While there the distressed poet wrote a plaintive appeal to the "mighty Empresse" and "dread Sovereign" Elizabeth "out of the ashes of desolation and wasteness of this wretched Realm of Ireland" to "receive the voices of a few most unhappy ghosts." In the second week of December, Sir Thomas Norreys

sent him with a letter to the Privy Council in England "manifesting the misery of the country." He reached London momentarily penniless, and died at a tavern in King Street, Westminster, on January 16th, 1599. He was buried in the neighbouring Abbey close to Chaucer, poets bearing his pall and casting verses into his grave.

Upon the appearance of *The Shepheards Calender* in 1579, "entitled" to Maister Philip Sidney and sped by some verses signed "Immerito," which reveal the singer at a glance, Spenser was acclaimed Parnassian, peer of Ariosto, and poet—our first since Chaucer; and the *Calender* recognised as the first poem for England to boast of since the days of John of Gaunt.

The title, as Warton was the first to point out, was borrowed from that of an old book first printed by Wynkyn de Worde, and reprinted on several occasions. A comical, odd book, Hearne called it, a strange medley of astrology and homely receipts, itself borrowed, in all probability, from an old French compilation called the *Kalendrier des Bergers*. Spenser's *Calender* is likewise a medley consisting of twelve compositions, alike called "Æclogues," and assigned to the twelve months of the year, but differing greatly in subject, metre, character, and excellence. It is very probable that they were written at different periods. The masquerade of shepherds, oaten pipes, and pastoral scenes is maintained throughout. In this Spenser was merely following the example borrowed by Virgil from the Greeks, revived by Petrarch and Mantuanus¹ (followed by Sannazaro, Guarini, and Tasso), and naturalised in England by Barclay and Googe. Spenser acquiesced in it, to the extent of uttering his thoughts through the mouths of imaginary shepherds and goatherds bearing homely, rustic names such as Diggon, Willy, and Piers. Colin Clout (adopted from Skelton) stands for Spenser himself, Hobbinol for Gabriel Harvey, Cuddie for Edward Kirke, Tityrus stands for Chaucer—

Dan Chaucer, well of English undefiled,

as Spenser later on described him—while Syrinx is Anne Boleyn, and Great Pan presumably Henry VIII. Thus, in its general scheme, *The Shepheards Calender* was quite conventional. Spenser had added little or nothing to the idea of the pastoral, and he had borrowed much. But he had followed no one model, and he had written eclogues in pure English matching anything written abroad. The experiment in versification was a triumphant success. There are passages in *The Shepheards Calender* of "poetical eloquence, of refined vigour, and of musical and imaginative sweetness, such as the English language had never attained to since the days of him who was to the age of Spenser what Shakespeare and Milton are to ours, the pattern and fount of poetry."

During the ten years following the appearance of the *Calender* Spenser resided mostly in Ireland, suffering the loss of that society which made the age of Elizabeth so famous, but not apparently suffering in reputation. The hopes of literary England were directed towards him, nor were these hopes disappointed when in 1589 he returned to England and brought his sheaves with him in the shape of the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. These three books were published early in 1590, and were dedicated to "the most high, mighty, and magnificent empress, Elizabeth." The next three books appeared in 1596, and the first complete edition of Spenser's works in 1609 included two additional cantos belonging to some later book, presumably never completed. The whole poem, as originally planned, was to have been completed in twelve books of twelve cantos each. In a letter to Raleigh written in 1589, and prefixed to the first edition, Spenser describes the poem, the greater part of which has yet to be written, as a continued allegory or dark conceit. He goes on to give some information apparently intended to guide one in the obscurity. The general end of all the book is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline. "I labour," he says, "to portray in Arthur before he was king

¹ Baptista Mantuanus (1448—1516), a Carmelite monk of the Pagan Renaissance, who imitated Virgil with amazing cleverness. Love-plaint, singing bout, elegy, fable, satire, panegyric, and Sicilian landscape were all pressed into Immerito's service in the form in which pastoralists had used them since Theocritus first sung, and Moschus lamented Bion. Spenser invented a Doric of his own, half rustic, half archaic (Chaucerian), which is justified to us by a quaint, sylvan music of its own. But those who knew not Chaucer looked askance at it, and Spenser used it more sparingly as he went along. Archaisms came to be shunned like the plague until Percy and Chatterton revived a taste with which Pope and Thomson, Prior and Shenstone, had merely played.

the image of a brave knight perfected in the twelve private moral virtues as Aristotle hath devised. The which is the purpose of these first twelve books." The poet intended to reserve the central event, which was the occasion of all the adventures of the poem, till they had all been related, leaving them, as it were, "in the air" till at the end of twelve long books the reader should at last be told how the whole thing had originated, and what it was all about. He made the mistake of confounding the answer to a riddle with the resolution of a plot. As it is *The Faerie Queene* has no definite relation to the various stories and the stories have no definite relation to each other. The different knights have no very special connection with the virtues they are supposed to represent, viz. holiness, temperance, chastity, friendship, justice, courtesy. To each virtue its own work; but the work of Spenser's knights is much the same in all cases. Britomart is not more chaste than Belphebe or than Amoret. Sir Calidore is not more courteous than another. Sir Guyon is not extraordinarily remarkable for temperance.

The allegory is fully entitled to the epithet "dark" which Spenser bestowed upon it, yet it is much clearer in the first book than in any of its successors. From the point of view of the allegorist the lack of any real unity is a damning fault. Spenser, in fact, was not a parabolist, but a poet; and *The Faerie Queene* is not an allegory, but a dream, full of symbolism, and touched here and there throughout with allegorical import more or less definite. Hazlitt's advice under these circumstances is to leave the allegory severely alone on the ground that if you don't meddle with the allegory the allegory won't meddle with you.

Like so many great works whose fame may be said to have become constant and not variable, *The Faerie Queene* has yielded to assiduous analysis the secrets of those faults which now seem so patent to every beholder. It is written in the language which is "no language,"¹ and it is concerned with an alle-

gory which is no allegory. Its other faults may be reduced to a certain monotony, akin to that of the *Morte d'Arthur* and inseparable from the similarity of adventures appropriate to chivalric romance and the difficulty of differentiating purely mythical characters. Of the many beauties and excellences of the poem every generation from the date of its appearance has testified through the mouths of its choicest spirits. For Spenser has not been the poet of a school of singers, but the poet of all true poets from Dryden and Pope and Byron to Milton, Keats, and Wordsworth.

It is significant that many of his best appreciators in modern times have regarded him less and less as a great thinker, allegorist, or justifier of the ways of God to man, and more and more as a metrical musician, and, above all, as a painter of scenes who, with the imaginative opulence of a literary Turner, has furnished a whole gallery of his own with the stuff that dreams are made of. One of his finest appreciators, Leigh Hunt, in his *Imagination and Fancy*, has dwelt almost exclusively upon this word-painting side of his genius. Spenser was in fact "the great painter." The personages in *The Faerie Queene* are not so much characters as richly coloured figures, moving to the accompaniment of delicious music in an atmosphere of serene remoteness from the earth. Not until Keats did another English poet arise so filled with a passion for outward shapes of beauty, so exquisitely alive to all impressions of the senses. In narrative description, in movement, and in action Spenser is inferior to his immediate model, the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. But in effects of richness of gloom or of mystery, or in the projection of allegoric figures perfect in beauty or in ugliness, he is almost unapproached. And above all, great painter that he is, he excels in atmosphere, an atmosphere of dreamland, silvery and pure and faint and mysterious as moonlight, in which the figures of his noble knights and maidens shine with an unearthly beauty.²

¹ "Affecting the ancients," said Jonson bluntly, "he writ no language"—inventing a more or less beautiful and appropriate jargon of his own.

² To those who would seek to penetrate his philosophy, Spenser would seem at first sight to reflect from a full surface the luxuriance and many-sided culture of the Renaissance. But Spenser does not really typify Renaissance ideas any more than he represents the dominant Drama and Lyric of his day. He is in a way far more modern, the moralising temper, the seriousness and melancholy of later Anglo-Saxon temperament being powerfully represented in his work. If he is the poet of Catholic chivalry, it is of a chivalry which has lost its ancient simplicity and become clouded by the abstractions of Protestant Platonism. The religious symbolism, too, though mediæval in origin, is complicated and embittered by the intrusion of

As compared with the style of his earlier work, that of *The Faerie Queene* is a good deal more matured than that of *The Shepheards Calender*. Spenser was the first and one of the finest of our student poets, and his style was quite traceably elaborated by the study of his greatest predecessors in England, such as Chaucer, Malory, and Sackville, and by the practice of imitation and translation from the choicest Italian poets in vogue—Petrarch, Ariosto, Tasso, Mantuan, Sannazaro, and last but not least from the French of Clement Marot. He was, moreover, a great lover of antiquities, and certainly projected if he did not write a work on Irish archæology. This zealous antiquarianism found expression in the archaic diction which he adopted in the first instance partly as a make-weight against the latinising tendency which was sapping the foundations of the vernacular, partly to compass a Chaucerian and old-world rusticity appropriate to a bucolic almanac such as *The Shepheards Calender*; but the ruggedness of this language was considerably modified in *The Faerie Queene*, where he adopted his archaisms more sparingly and deliberately with a view to securing definite artistic effects of colour, depth, and cadence. In *The Faerie Queene* are visible also the resources of much wider reading and closer observation of nature than in his previous work, and there is throughout a much greater luxuriance of colour, imagery, and mythology. As with other poets of his time, pre-eminently Tasso, the gods and heroes of antiquity glide continually across the vistas of his strange, enchanted forest, in which we wander ankle deep in the yielding moss of heroic allegory.

But it is perhaps specially in the music of metre that the greatest definite advance is to be noted. The predominant metrical instrument of the *Calender* (apart from the old five-foot heroic line, which is most splendidly handled by Spenser) was an accentual line of four beats, an old measure which derived new lustre from the brilliant use of it made

in after times by Chatterton, Blake, and Coleridge. The stanza of *The Faerie Queene* is one of Spenser's own invention, a metrical creation of the first order, manipulated with consummate skill. The Spenser stanza, says Professor Courthope, is plainly "a development of the eight-lined ballad strophe first introduced by Chaucer from France. This consisted of two quatrains with three sets of rhymes, the quatrains being connected with each other by a common rhyme in the fourth and fifth lines, thus, *a b a b b c b c*." To this measure Spenser gave a new movement by adding an alexandrine rhyming with the sixth and eighth lines, thus, *a b a b b c b c c*, thus greatly enhancing the effect of the *ottava rima*, which his stanza otherwise resembled, by avoiding the somewhat mechanical snap of the final double rhyme.¹

"With such a metre, and such a lexicon, marvels in verbal music become almost easy. Hardly any two stanzas of this enormous work will be found exactly to repeat each other in cadence. The secrets of varying the cæsura of the line, and of using or abstaining from *enjambement* or overlapping, which have been by turns ignored, recovered, and abused, and on which rests practically the whole art of rescuing any metre from monotony, were perfectly well known to Spenser, and as cunningly used by him as by any of his followers. Nor can he be said to be ignorant, though he employs them rather less, of the other two great metrical secrets, the use of trisyllabic feet and the distribution of words of varying weight and length over the line."²

The great success of the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* induced the publisher to apply to Spenser for material for a further volume. This appeared early in 1591, entitled *Complaints*, forming a collection of nine miscellaneous poems. Of these *Muipoptmos, or The Fate of the Butterfly*, swept by a gust of wind into a spider's web, is a delightful exercise of lyrical fancy (admirably criticised by Lowell); *The Ruines of Time* is an elegiac tribute to

religious party spirit. The fact is not to be supposed or concealed, that in poetry, too, as well as in religion, the old moorings were by way of being lost. With many a lingering look the poet leaves the light and warmth of the Mediterranean, the tradition of Holy Church and Roman Empire, and with the aspirations of Tudor England to fill his sails (upon which the radiance of the southern sun is still reflected), and with the Reformation to serve him as rudder, sets a new course for the ideal across the trackless waves of Futurity.

¹ A somewhat similar use of the alexandrine to set off the decasyllabic line is seen in a poem by Ferrers in *The Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth Castle*.

² Saintsbury, *A Short History of English Literature*, 2nd ed., p. 269.

the Countess of Pembroke, lamenting the deaths of Sidney, Leicester, and Warwick; *The Tears of the Muses*, a lament upon the low state of learning in England; while the vigorous though desponding *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, perhaps the most direct of Spenser's writings, contains a poignant satire in decasyllabic couplets upon certain aspects of the English court.

Other fragments of Spenser's early work, a volume of *Stemmata Dudleiana* and a poem to which several references are made called *The Dying Pelican*, were never recovered. On Sidney's death in 1586 the most poetic of the innumerable elegies, albeit highly artificial and somewhat conventional in its decorations, was naturally Spenser's *Astrophel: A Pastoral Elegie*. In 1594 his *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* went to Ponsonby for publication. The sonnets are rather disappointing in their lack of individuality, but the *Epithalamion* (written in alternately rhyming decasyllabics), which crowns the series of *Amoretti*, is perhaps the most splendid hymn of triumphant love in the language. In 1595 appeared *Colin Clouts come Home Againe*, a fascinating narrative of his journey to court and what he saw there, written immediately upon his return to Kilcolman in 1591. His next visit to London in 1596 saw the issue of his *Four Hymns* in praise of love and beauty, heavenly love and heavenly beauty. The most stately and noble of these—characteristic, too, in its union of intellectual and sensual rapture—is the second hymn, in honour of beauty, the one worship of Spenser's life. Later in the year he published his *Spousall Verse* or *Prothalamion* in honour of the double marriage of the Earl of Worcester's daughters, written in a beautiful measure of his own devising and full of the most enchanting melody.

Among the disciples and imitators who followed Spenser into fields allegorical or pastoral, the two most noteworthy were the two Fletchers, Giles and Phineas.

Giles Fletcher, "equally beloved of the Muses and of the Graces," came of a poetic stock. His father was Dr. Giles Fletcher, author of *Licia*; his elder brother Phineas wrote *The Purple Island*; and his cousin John was the dramatic partner of Francis Beaumont. Born about 1587, he spent full fifteen years among the colleges of his dearly loved

Cambridge, was one of the long line of spiritual teachers who have filled the Church of St. Mary's, and quitted this sphere only toward the end of his life for the lonely vicarage of Alderton, on the Suffolk coast, where his death in 1623 is said by Fuller to have been hastened by "melancholy." His only literary work of importance was a poem entitled *Christ's Victorie and Triumph in Heaven and Earth, Over and After Death*, which was dedicated to the Master of Trinity and published at Cambridge in 1610. This is a religious epic in four books and 2,100 lines, dealing with the Redemption, and containing passages (such as those describing Satan as an aged sire slowly footing in the silent wilderness and the temptation of Jesus in the goodly garden and in the Bower of Vain Delight) which it is evident that Milton used with profit in the second of his great epics. The poem is diversified by lyrical measures, but is written for the most part in a modified Spenserian stanza, a stanza considerably injured, however, by the omission of Spenser's seventh line. He retains Spenser's allegorical method and many of his archaic mannerisms. But the work is too sincere and too genuinely reverent to be spoiled by literary affectation. It is not primarily a literary exercise but a long labour of love by a man of marked literary talent, ingenious and cultivated and of some imagination.

Phineas Fletcher, the elder of the two brothers, also took orders and died rector of Hilgay, in Norfolk, in 1650. The best remembered of his numerous poems is *The Purple Island*, not published before 1633 but written many years earlier, probably early in the reign of James I., upon whom a good deal of the usual adulation is heaped. Spenser and Virgil are avowedly the models, and the poem is written in a debased Spenserian stanza of seven lines. The allegory is much more methodical than that of *The Faerie Queene*. The Purple Island is the body of Man with its three metropolitan cities, the Brain, the Heart, and the Liver, in which rise the great rivers of the Blood. The anatomy and physiology of the island having been treated at greater length, its occupants, the intellectual and moral faculties of Man, are similarly personified, and in the last two cantos the virtues and vices are marshalled in hostile array and we have a grand battle!



From a Drawing by Walter Crane, reproduced by kind permission of the Artist and Mr. George Allen.

The Wedding of The Medway and The Thames FAERIE QUEENE, IV. 11.

The quaintness and pedantry of this amazing poem are apt to disguise its better qualities; but the personifications are often noble, the style is vigorous and antithetical, the phrasing frequently happy and strong.

Leaving Spenser's allegorical school for the time, we come to the chief of his pastoral imitators, William Browne (1591—1643), a native of Tavistock, of a good Devonian family, who was educated at Exeter College, married a lady of some means, and quitting the Temple about 1616, lived thenceforth a retired life in the country. He followed Spenser's *Calender* very closely in his *Shepherd's Pipe*, a series of seven eclogues in varying metre. But Browne's chief work was *Britannia's Pastoralls*, the value of which consists just in this, that with an easy and simple charm of manner he sets before us the pleasant things of real country life. Like his master, he introduces into his *Arcadia* a large number of river-gods, well-gods, dryads, and nymphs from the same sources of classical inspiration, Theocritus, Moschus, Virgil, and Ovid, as well as their Italian imitators. The conventionality of this species of decoration gives to all these seventeenth-century pastorals a detestably suburban air; yet Browne generally appreciated the country, while as for his own West Country he loved it as a true poet should, and celebrated the beauty of those rivers whose very names are musical:

The Walla, Tamar, Tavy, Exe, and Tau,
The Torridge, Otter, Ockment, Dart, and Plym—

with the same devotedness that impelled Burns to "cock the crests" of neglected Ayrshire streams.

To the same pastoral flock belong the obscure and belated Elizabethan, William Basse (1583—1653), whose pastoral elegies or eclogues and *Polyhymnia*, written about 1623, remained in manuscript for over 250 years, and John Dennys, author of the curious but unaffected poem on *The Secrets of Angling*, 1613. From disciples of the school of Spenser, such as the pastoral lyrists Breton and Wither, the Platonist Henry More, and the romantic author of *Pharonnida*, William Chamberlayne, calling for notice elsewhere, we can pass without any great dislocation to a group of writers who

combine the pastoral and allegory with metrical history and topography in poems of truly monumental proportions. Their vastness has caused them to be mistaken for prehistoric abodes of the dead rather than monuments of the living. Drayton, Daniel, and Warner,¹ have indeed been not unhappily described as the saurians of English poetry. It is true that they did not approach in prolixity *The Sacred Warre* of W. Barret, an epic of 68,000 lines which failed to find a publisher even in the reign of James I., and still remains in manuscript. Yet the metrical histories of Daniel and Drayton are both designed upon a truly colossal scale.

Samuel Daniel, the son of a music-master, was born near Taunton in 1562. He entered Magdalen Hall, Oxford, in 1579, but "his geny being more prone to easier and smoother studies than in pecking and hewing at logic," he left Oxford degreeless in 1582, and after travel in Italy settled down as a tutor under the patronage of the Earl of Pembroke; this was exchanged about 1587 for a Yorkshire home as tutor in the Clifford family. His sonnet cycle in praise of *Delia*, 1592, was warmly hailed by Colin Clout, and a second edition minutely revised soon appeared with the addition of an "historical" narrative piece, *The Complaynt of Rosamond*, written in the metre of Shakespeare's *Lucrece*. In 1594 came his rhymed Senecan tragedy, *Cleopatra*, in which the Egyptian enchantress moralises on her own fall through some 200 lines. In 1595 were issued the first four books of his bulky historical epic, *The Civile Wars between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York*, completed in eight books in 1609, when it numbered upwards of 7,000 lines. On Spenser's death he seems to have succeeded in his position as a so-called "volunteer laureate." Early in the reign of James, whose advent he celebrated in a *Panegyric Congratulatorie*, he was made one of the grooms of the privy chamber to Queen Anne, who took great delight in his conversation. From the commencement of the new reign Daniel was drawn in to bear a share in the court festivities, and his best art was shown in the fourth and last of his masques or pastoral tragi-comedies, entitled *Hymen's Triumph*. His

¹ William Warner (1558—1609) gave the world in 1584 *Pan, his Syrinx or Pipe Compact of seven Riedes*, and five years later completed his metrical history of the world from the Flood to Flodden Field. *Albions England*, as it was called, reached a seventh edition in 1612, and ruined the sale of *The Mirror for Magistrates*. Its interminable couplets (fourteen syllables to each line) are not often disturbed at the present day.

rhyming is sweet, his language stately and copious, inclining always, however, rather to the neutral ground of prose and verse. For some reason or other Daniel appears to have been dissatisfied with the recognition that he obtained at court and among the lettered. He turned husbandman, and, as Fuller says, devoted himself to the practical exposition of the *Georgics*. "I question whether his Italian will fit our English husbandry." He died in his native Somerset, at Ridge Farm, Beckington, on October 14th, 1619. His old pupil, Lady Anne Clifford, put up a tablet to his memory in the parish church. His *Whole Workes* were collected in 1623.

His good qualities are evidenced in the epithet which has become his by right of prescription—"well-languaged" Daniel. And this epithet is well earned by a kind of familiarity in his rhythm and his phrasing, a familiarity which makes his language seem almost modern to us as compared with that of some of his greater contemporaries. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge are loud in praise of his pure and natural language. Coleridge wrote letters imploring Lamb to try to appreciate Daniel better than he did, and Lamb responded by including a passage from *Hymen's Triumph* in his specimens of the English dramatists. Though his verse lacks colour and emotion, it has great beauty of line, together with a lucidity and a serenity that do occasionally soar into the region of the majestic.

Daniel was outshone by a very near neighbour in the realm of poesy, one who combined his own studious zeal for verse-making with a double share of poetic fibre, Michael Drayton. The grandson of a well-to-do Warwickshire butcher, who dwelt at Atherstone, Michael Drayton was born at Hartshill, Warwickshire (a quarry-village in which his cottage was aptly "discovered" some fifty years ago), in 1563. As a youth he seems to have been attached to the Goodere family of Polesworth, in the capacity of "a proper goodly page." At Polesworth he studied side by side with Sir Henry Goodere, a good friend in later years of Jonson and Donne, and himself the author of a few courtly fragments of verse. It seems possible that this generous patron may have maintained him for a time at one of the universities; Drayton's muse is certainly not of the unlearned order. In the old convent buildings, upon which the hall was engrafted, he doubtless

romped with one of the daughters of the house, the fair Anne Goodere, by whom, and no other, it is pretty certain that the sonnets of Drayton's *Idea* were inspired. Nor is the epithet "fair" a merely conventional one, for the physician of the family, John Hall, who married Shakespeare's daughter Judith, expressly calls her a beauty. Two years later, in 1595, she married Sir Henry Rainsford, and the inference seems irresistible that it was the parting between the poet and his old playmate and literary mistress which occasioned that wonderful sonnet, "Since there's no help—come let us kiss and part." This was not published until 1619, but it must have been written, we feel sure, a good many years before this. The pastorals of 1593 were called *Idea*, *The Shepheards Garland*, fashioned in "nine eglogs," written on the model of Spenser's *Calender*. Like so much of Drayton's work, they were subsequently refashioned, and the beautiful daffodil song—

Gorbo, as thou cam'st this way
By yonder little hill,
Or as thou through the field didst stray,
Saw'st thou my Daffadil?—

one of the most fragrant of Drayton's lyrics, was enwrought in the ninth eclogue of the 1606 version. Drayton's power of song was of distinctly slow growth.

In 1594, after the *Astrophel and Stella* and *Delia* sonnets, it was hard for a poet not to be inditing of these matters. The result was the fifty-one "Amours in Quatorzains" of Drayton's *Idea's Mirrour* (of which there were recensions in 1599, 1602, 1605, 1619). Much of this work consisted in framing and glazing French adaptations from the Italian against the rigours of the English climate.

Drayton's next venture was the most popular appeal that he made to his contemporaries; this was his *Englands Heroicall Epistles*, published in 1597. Obtaining a hint from Ovid's *Heroides* for the stories of historical amours, he imparted to them a richness of declamation and a Marlowesque vigour which is foreign to most of his work. And sounding though the verse is, it is written in heroic couplets of a smoothness that seems often to anticipate that of a much later period. In 1603, though an elaborate panegyric which he prepared for the reception of James was repulsed, he became an esquire to Sir Walter Aston, and found a pleasant haven of retreat in time of need at his seat of

Tixall, in Staffordshire. It was thus in somewhat restored circumstances that he published in 1606 his *Poemes Lyric and Pastoral: Odes and Eglogs*. Some of the odes, which are written in strophes of Drayton's invention, are among the finest things he wrote, and a place is found among them for that stirring ballad of *Agincourt*, the fine flower of old patriotic lyric. It was based with great skill upon some fragments of a much more ancient ditty, and it was sedulously revised and improved by Drayton during his lifetime. Heywood imitated it in his *Edward IV.*; Tennyson took it for the prototype of his *Charge of the Light Brigade*, but he has not succeeded in surpassing his model. Like Shakespeare's *Henry V.*, it must have had a powerful effect in focussing attention upon triumphs as remote from that day as Blenheim and Ramillies are from the present.

On happy Crispin day
Fought was this noble fray,
Which fame did not delay
To England to carry :
O! when shall Englishmen
With such acts fill a pen,
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry?

In his historical *Legends* (Piers Gaveston, Matilda, Robert of Normandy, 1593-6) Drayton reverted to the influence of Daniel, and the motive of the vicissitudes in the fortunes of the great ones of the earth, which had so often done duty in our literature from Chaucer and Lydgate to *The Mirror for Magistrates*. The first poem that he planned on a large scale was *Mortimeriados*, 1596, republished with radical alterations, including a change from seven-line stanza to *ottava rima*, and with a new title, *The Barrons' Wars*, in 1603. It forms an epic narrative in 3,600 lines of the events of the reign of Edward II., ending with the retributive overthrow of Mortimer and Isabella by Edward III.

For twenty full years from 1598 off and on Drayton was working diligently at his *Poly-Olbion*, or a chorographical description of all the tracts, rivers, mountains, forests, and other parts of Great Britain, of which he issued eighteen songs or cantos in 1613. This famous topography, which is for the most part a sufficiently tedious and prosaic recapitulation of Camden and Leland in fourteen-syllable verse, is encased in a thin film of personification and antique legend. A stern patriot alone could have finished such a work. Drayton

must have been glad to see the thirtieth and last song printed in 1622. Meanwhile in 1619 he collected into a small folio all the poems with the exception of the *Poly-Olbion* that he wished to preserve, and added some new lyrics. In 1627 he brought out a fresh volume of miscellaneous poems, two somewhat dreary metrical chronicles (*The Battaile of Agincourt* and *The Miseries of Queen Margarite*), *The Shepherd's Sirena*, and the daintily imagined and quaintly comic fairy tale the *Nymphidia*, telling how Oberon, king of the fairies, and the valiant Pigwigginn, mounted on earwigs, helmeted with beetle-heads, sworded with hornets' stings, with cockle-shell shields and armour of fish scales, fought for the love of Queen Mab, and were cured by the waters of Lethe. Of equal charm with this Lilliputian extravaganza, which has left a little wake of its own in the history of English poetry, are some of the verses in *The Muses' Elysium* included in his last volume, published in 1630. The poet had imitated all round, tried every kind of measure, and put his lips to every kind of mouthpiece from the bassoon to the flute. In these pastoral dialogues of his last years, he blossomed out in a manner which showed that he had fathomed the resources of this species of art, borrowing the tones and the cadences of a later generation, while he kept, not wholly free indeed, but fully *as* free from the affectation which is the bane of the pastoral as his old master, Colin Clout. He died in Fleet Street, about one hundred yards east of Temple Bar, in December, 1631, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. His property was assessed at £24 2s. 8d.

Drayton practises almost every kind of verse measure: sextain, rhyme royal, sonnet, Italian octave, heroic couplet, short-lined ode, octosyllabic couplet, dithyrambic, and alexandrine. He was not a master either of rhythm or metre, and, like most of the poets of the day other than song-writers or dramatists, he understood his models imperfectly. But he wrote an enormous amount of verse, and success came to him fitfully, yet once or twice without stint:

Near to the silver Trent
Sirena dwelleth,
She to whom Nature lent
All that excelleth.

In the generations from Milton to Goldsmith Drayton seems to have completely dropped out of poetic memory; but although Goldsmith

asked who he was, an attempt had already been made at reparation in a fairly complete edition of his works published in 1748. Lamb and Coleridge did much to enforce his claim, and Southey thought sufficiently well of his

Poly-Olbion to include the whole of it in his selections from the British poets in 1831. Rossetti wrote exuberantly of the sonnet "Since there's no help" as almost the best in the language, if not quite.¹

¹ Spenser's influence upon our poetic literature has been profound. His has left his mark upon Milton, Bunyan, Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. The eighteenth century produced some Spenser scholars, notably John Hughes, Thomas Birch, Thomas Warton, and Henry John Todd, whose edition in 8 vols., 1805, is still a standard work. Dr. Johnson writing in *The Rambler*, in 1751, lamented that imitation of Spenser was corrupting the age. He referred to the experiments of Thomson and Shenstone in the Spenserean stanza, attempts which were soon to be indefinitely multiplied. To Byron, Shelley, and Keats in particular (for to Keats "Spenser revealed the secret of his birth"), the attraction of Spenser's stanza proved irresistible. Among later devout worshippers at Spenser's romantic altar, observe Coleridge, Scott, Southey, Hazlitt, Campbell, Lamb, Leigh Hunt, "Christopher North," Rossetti, and Tennyson. Landor is one of the few singers to whom Spenser appeared tedious; even he was sufficiently attracted to devote two Imaginary Conversations to the author of *The Faerie Queene*.

Spenser's Works were first collected in 1611. Since the annotated editions of Hughes (1715), and that of Todd in 1805, the most elaborate editions are those of Prof. F. J. Child, Boston, 1855, J. P. Collier, 1862, and Dr. Grosart, in 10 vols., 1880-82. A desirable one-volume edition is that issued by Routledge (1850), though this is superseded as regards the Memoir by the Globe edition, 1899 (small print). An excellent edition of *The Faerie Queene* in six slim volumes is that of Miss Kate M. Warren,* 1897-9 (Constable). Students will also obtain Warton's *Observations on The Faerie Queene* (1752, 1762), Craik's *Spenser and his Times*, 3 vols., 1845, R. W. Church's *Spenser*, 1879, in the Men of Letters Series, and Prof. Herford's edition of *The Shepherds Calender*,* 1895. Of essays introductory to the study of Spenser, Leigh Hunt's selections and critical notice in his *Imagination and Fancy*,* Lowell's Essay on Spenser in *English Poets*,* and Prof. Courthope's chapter on "Court Allegory: Edmund Spenser" (*History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. 234-87) are the most suggestive. F. I. Carpenter's *Outline Guide to Study of Spenser* (1894) is also useful. Of William Browne a desirable edition is that by Gordon Goodwin (Muses Library). Of Drayton there are *Selections*, ed. Bullen, 1883, and a fuller volume promised, ed. A. R. Waller; and see *Michael Drayton: A Critical Study*, by Prof. Elton, 1905. Daniel has been edited by Dr. Grosart for the Huth Library in 3 vols., 1887.

One of the least admirable moulds created by Greek art for Elizabethan copyists was the Didactic Poem. The *Works and Days* of the Boeotian Hesiod had a most remarkable echo in the early Elizabethan *Five Hundred pointes of good Husbandrie as well for the Champion or Open Countrie as also for the Woodland or severall, mixed in everie month with Huswiferie*, which was in course of enlargement from 1557 to 1580. Its author, Thomas Tusser, an Essex man (Rivenhall), choir-boy at St. Paul's, an Etonian under the bloodthirsty Udall, and a scholar of King's, Cambridge (1543), tried his hand at husbandry near Witham, but died in London May 3rd, 1580, and was, appropriately enough, buried in the Poultry, Cheapside. His work is a kind of agricultural Sternhold and Hopkins, with admixture of proverbs and old saws in the old nursery rhyme measure of "eight and six" (as Quince calls it), Skeltonics, and rude anapaests:

Go wash well, saith Sommer, with sunne I shall drie,
Go wring well, saith Winter, with winde so shall
I . . .
One dog for a hog and one cat for a mouse,
One ready to give is enough in a house. . . .

Where window is open, cat maketh a fray,
Yet wilde cat with two legs is worse by my fay. . . .
Where hens fall a-cackling, take heed to their nest,
Where drabs fall a-whisp'ring, take heed to the
rest. . . .

Two later and more ordinary didactic versifiers were Greville and his congener, Sir John Davies. School-mate of Sidney at Shrewsbury, Sir Fulke Greville (Lord Brooke) wrote his friend's life or eulogy in a fine specimen of ornate prose. He was a jealously guarded favourite of the Queen, but retained the favour of James, and wrote long-winded didactic poems (in *ababcc* metre) on "Humane Learning," "Fame and Honour," and "War"; they are caviare to the general, and Hazlitt accused Lamb of liking them because no one could understand them. Two dramas deal similarly with problems of political science. His "sonnets" are unlike any other sonnets. Greville was stabbed by a servant in 1628, and his poems appeared in 1633, posthumously, and in the same year with George Herbert's. Sir John Davies (1567-1626), a distinguished lawyer and judge of excellent family, wrote in seven-line stanza a curious poem (*Orchestra*, 1596) on the musical motion of all things in a dance of love, and another graver poem called *Nosce Teipsum*, which he couched in the long elegiac quatrains rendered famous by Dryden and Gray.

CHAPTER VII

SONNETEERS, SONG-WRITERS, AND MINOR VERSIFIERS

“To describe a thing of no account we say sometimes that it is ‘not worth an old song.’ When you come to think of it, how few things are !”

Sir Philip Sidney—The fashion of sonneteering—Elizabethan lyrics and music—Lyly, Nash, Greene, Lodge, and Breton—Campion—Barnfield—Browne—Wotton.

THE fashion of sonneteering in England was really set by Sir Philip Sidney, over a hundred of whose sonnets, under the title of *Astrophel and Stella*, were circulated in no less than three separate editions during 1591. The notion of sonnets and sonnet-writing was already fairly familiar in England. Both Wyatt and Surrey had turned Italian *canzone* into irregular sonnet forms. Googe, Turberville, and others had produced so-called “sonnets”; Thomas Watson devoted the close and unintermittent labour of a zealous literary amateur to pouring the original wine of Petrarch out of French into English bottles. The sonnet was at this time scarcely regarded as a definite literary form, but rather as a synonym for a conventional love poem in eulogy of a mistress. It is in this sense that Shakespeare uses the word in his early comedies. The outward form of the sonnet, and its special applicability to court and complimentary usage, were soon better understood; but we still hear of six-line and eighteen-line sonnets (Breton’s “Pretty twinkling starry eyes” is called *Sonnet*, and so is Wither’s “Shall I, wasting in despair,” as late as 1615); and, indeed, it is not until we get to Drummond and Milton that the technicalities and exigencies of the sonnet as a verse form can be said to have engaged the study of competent poetical scholarship. Sidney’s sonnets were probably written for the most part in 1581, within half a dozen years, that is to say, of the appearance of two of the largest and most popular sonnet collections in France—those of Ronsard and Desportes. The sonnet was soon flourishing in the English court as a

delicate exotic. Then in 1591 Sidney’s sonnets were published, and even thus transplanted to a ruder atmosphere, it seemed for a time as if the sonnet were going to flourish rankly. From 1591 to 1598 nearly every year witnessed the appearance of three or four competing sonnet series. Most of these volumes were highly frigid and artificial, and it is mainly to the fact that Shakespeare himself was for a time captivated by the passing craze that we owe our interest in such productions. Several isolated sonnets by Drayton and others are of a rare finish and perfection; but as regards collections, after the unapproachable 154 sonnets of Shakespeare, the collection of Sidney’s entitled *Astrophel and Stella* has probably the most intrinsic interest; while to the literary historian, both as a pioneer effort and as enshrining the romance of the Bayard or the Hirosé of English letters, *Astrophel and Stella* must always make what is perhaps a disproportionately strong appeal.

In 1575, at Chartley, Philip Sidney first met Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex. She was then only about thirteen, while Sidney was a young man of twenty-one, lately returned from the Continent with his head full of “serious” imaginings and ambitious dreams. He was a favourite of the Earl of Essex, and, as presumptive heir to the Leicester estates, a highly eligible *parti*. It was perfectly natural, therefore, that the project of marriage should have been entertained between the youthful heiress and the gallant but impecunious courtier. And there seems no doubt that some such scheme was broached, and that the initiative

was taken not by Sidney (who was consumed at this time not so much by love as by love's antidote—ambition) but by the relatives of the lady. Early in 1581, however, Penelope was hastily married to a well-endowed *roué*, Lord Rich, and then at last Sidney discovered the passion which had apparently been smouldering for some time, and found himself in the position of one who realises the depth of his love for a woman only when he is bound in honour to fight against his desire. Sonnets written for the most part during his forced retirement from court in 1581 represent a summer thunder-cloud of sentiment tinted by beautiful reflections and lurid gleams from afar, and emitting a few, a very few, lightning flashes of genuine passion.

Much of Sidney's best verse is to be found in the songs which are intertwined with the sonnets. The majority of these, it is important to bear in mind, are full of reminiscences of French and Italian conceits, and if the poems as a connected series are really a record of passion tragically thwarted and finally suppressed, it is at least strange that this passion should have needed so much help from Petrarch and Desportes in expressing itself. It may be that the book as a whole has gained a partly adventitious reputation due to the personal fame of the writer, yet Sidney's sonnets are certainly superior to any previously written in English. Admirers of the French sonneteers could no longer maintain that the *quatorzain* was too delicate a plant to bear transplantation to England; and writing sonnets to the eyebrows of despaired-of mistresses, real or imaginary, soon became the reigning literary fashion. Many of these exercises are so wire-drawn as to leave one in doubt whether Sidney's influence was an unmitigated benefit. But in one respect, at any rate, it was of real value: like all romanticists, he had appealed to nature. He had proclaimed love, love unadorned, a worthy and sufficient theme for the poet. The success of poems written on such a principle at a time when euphuism threatened to make of the lyric a scholastic exercise must have been really valuable.

The fashion set by Sidney, and also the particular form of the Elizabethan sonnet, is to a large extent confirmed by Daniel's collection of fifty-five sonnets entitled *Delia*, which found their way into print in February, 1592. The love which they celebrate is evidently of a very platonic kind, and to compensate for deficiency

in passion, Daniel falls back upon the resources of his French masters, especially Desportes. The success of *Delia* was so unequivocal that several booksellers seem to have rashly concluded that sonnets were destined to make their fortunes. Within seven months of *Delia* appeared the slender and typical sonnet-book entitled *Diana*. The writer, Henry Constable (1562—1613), had the misfortune to be a Roman Catholic at a time when the anti-Jesuitical panic was at its height. He had to leave England hastily, was shadowed abroad by Protestant emissaries, repulsed at the Scottish court for fear of offending Elizabeth, and finally, on venturing to return without a licence, thrown into the Tower; and all this although he appears to have been of a most peaceable disposition, was of a good family, and, in his sonneteering days, would appear to have had the *entrée* at court. His sonnets are graceful, ingenious, and typical; sweet in phrase, wholly deficient in passion, wrought in the French vein and held up as good models by Ben Jonson and Edmund Boulton, who writes, in 1616, in his *Hypercritica* of Constable's, "quick and high discovery of conceits."

In 1593 the sonneteers were reinforced from various quarters. Barnaby Barnes gave forth over a hundred sonnets in his *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*; Watson issued his sixty-one *Tears of Fancie, or Love Disdained*; Giles Fletcher his *Licia, or Poems of Love*, in honour of his lady; and Lodge his *Phyllis*, which is perhaps the most charming of the minor sonnet-books of the period. Though a diligent imitator of the French, Lodge has the dexterity to give his complaints an air of the most direct and artless simplicity. Better than the sonnets themselves, however, are the pastoral lyrics which are scattered among them. Drayton's *Idea's Mirrour* came next in 1594, and within a twelve-month followed the *Celia* of William Percy, the *Zepheria* of some anonymous author, Chapman's *Coronet*, the *Alcilia* of J. C., *Forty Love Sonnets* by E. C., and, finally, the eighty-eight *Amoretti* of Spenser. Certain *Amoretti* were addressed, though not by name, to the Elizabeth Boyle who, in 1594, became Spenser's wife; but many of them are either purely ideal or not poems of love at all. A few are wholly expressive of religious aspiration, while the larger proportion are of the conventional type. He represents his lady as a beautiful but carnivorous creature. In one sonnet she is a lion, in another

a tiger, in a third a panther. Her cruelty is a constantly recurring theme. She is an angler who smiles on her dying victims so sweetly that they enjoy dying; a cruel dolphin who will not come to Arion; a new Pandora, her beauty is but a bait; she binds men in the golden net of her hair; again and again the poet begs her piteously not to slay him outright.

Sonneteering was a fashion the force of which was soon spent, but the publication of light lyrical verse, generally in song form, but in an immense variety of measures, continued in great vigour throughout the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Next to Elizabethan drama, Elizabethan song is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the age. It is also the most independent, for in lyrical measures English poets forgot their classical and Italian schoolmasters and were natural and spontaneous, or if schooled at all were schooled by the native English musicians. The early lyrists are frequently hampered by archaic idiom, clumsy convention, and outworn prosody; but in 1580 or thereabouts a change comes rapidly. Gaiety, expansiveness, fanciful ease, richness, and music take the ear and dispel the cloudy and didactic commonplace of lingering mediævalism.

This lyrical impulse seeks expression in a great variety of poetical forms. Elizabethan poets comparatively rarely published volumes containing lyric poems only. Such poems were frequently published in volumes containing poems of a different order, as in Drayton's *Poems, Lyric and Pastoral*. Lyric verse is also found scattered through the romances of Greene, Lodge, and others, in the plays of Shakespeare, Fletcher, Webster, Dekker, and Jonson, and in the sonnet-books. But the principal store-houses of purely lyrical verse published at this epoch

are the miscellanies and the song-books. A rapid succession of such miscellanies is significant of the popular taste. The earlier anthologies of Tottel, Edwards, and Proctor¹ were thus followed in 1584 by Clement Robinson's *Handefull of Pleasant Delites*. In 1588 and 1592 appeared fresh delights and conceits under the names of Munday and Breton. In 1593 was published *The Phoenix Nest*, in 1599 *The Passionate Pilgrim*, and in 1600 no less than three separate anthologies of extremely varying but very high average merit: the famous and finely edited *England's Helicon*, the mediocre *England's Parnassus*, and an inferior scrap-book of "poetical petals" entitled *Belvedere, or The Garden of the Muses*. Finally, in 1602 was published Francis Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*.

Still more significant in popular taste are the song-books—slim quartos or folios in which words and music are printed together—a very large number of which were issued.² The most important of these were the song-books of William Byrd, John Dowland, Thomas Morley (of "It was a lover and his lass" fame), and Thomas Campion. As a general rule (though not in Campion's case), the composers were responsible only for the music in the books issued in their names. Much excellent verse and some exquisite specimens of pure song-writing were hidden away among the "ayres," motets, madrigals, and accompaniments of these and other song-books until they were brought to light mainly owing to the researches of Mr. A. H. Bullen.

Elizabethan music was music perfectly fitted to song, slight and melodic, full of local colour and suggestiveness, admirably adapted in every way to the flexible lyric poetry which was often not far removed from folk-song. The songs which

¹ See pp. 48-9.

² Davey gives a list of about ninety collections of Madrigals, Ayres, Canzonets and Ballets, actually published between 1587 and 1630, in addition to vast quantities of vocal music of this time in MS. (*History of English Music*, 171-4). It is important to distinguish between the quality of the madrigals and that of the "ayres." The former consisted of a few jingling rhymes set to elaborate music. The "ayres" are stanzaic, and the words are all important to the composition, for the accompaniment is quite independent, and the tune ordinarily is simple and slow, so that not a word would be missed. As to the universal prevalence of music (1570-1630) the reader is referred to Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time*. Servants and apprentices in those days advertised their musical abilities. Tinkers sang catches, milkmaids trolled ballads, carters whistled; each trade, and even the beggars, had their special songs; the viol hung in the guest-chamber for the amusement of casual visitors; our musical "execution" was the envy of all Europe; lute, cittern, and virginals for the diversion of waiting customers were in every barber's shop. They had music at dinner, music at supper, music at weddings, music at funerals, music at dawn, music at night. Musicians were constantly introduced upon the stage. Sometimes the dramatist wrote a song for them; more often than not, they provided their own. The original identity of poet and musician had by no means disappeared when Elizabeth reigned. Much later, courtly poets and gentlemen of the Royal Music or Chapel Royal continued to be drawn from the same families.

were written to this music are marked by lack of intensity and passion, by brilliant fancy and unfailing vivacity; they are not overweighted with meaning, neither at their best are they overcharged with convention or with ornament. One of their essential qualities is their objective idealism, their impersonal character. The poet loves love, "sweet desire," but no single woman; he does not write from his own, but from common experience. He commonly masquerades as a shepherd, and in this capacity invites some dainty nymph to come maying with him or to play at barley-break. In a more serious mood he complains of the coldness of his mistress and her compassionless beauty, or dwells upon the superior happiness of shepherds as compared with courtiers. Many of the flakes from this wonderfully rich bed of Elizabethan song have such a light and holiday air about them that it is impossible to characterise or to classify them. They are as spontaneous and as irresponsible as nursery rhymes, the carols of choring birds, or the tuneful *rispetti* of the Tuscan peasants. They sparkle, they sing of themselves, often to their own dance-music: spirit and substance, "music and sweet poetry agree" rarely—the enchantment, however, is not in the thought but in the tone.

Some of the deftest lyrics are often to be found embedded in plays the general character of which was anything but light or enticing, as, for example, in some of the dramas of Lyly, Dekker, Nash, Munday, and Jonson. Of the Elizabethan poets whose work as poets was primarily lyrical, the most characteristic are Greene, Lodge, Breton, Barnfield, and Campion.

Several of the lyrics in plays by Lyly¹ reach the highest point of daintiness and refinement. There is a haunting cadence about the few of Peele's songs that remain to us, such as the beautiful song of Paris and Ænone:

Fair and fair, and twice so fair
As fair as any may be.

And equally memorable with this, perhaps, is the quaint and inspiring

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king

of Thomas Nash. Greene is even more prettily fantastic in such poems as "Sitting by a Rivers side"; "Walking in a valley greene"; "Infida's

Song"; "Weep not, my wanton; smile upon my knee"; or, the Shepherd's Wife's song:

Ah, what is love? It is a pretty thing.

His verses, like his plays, are a rich medley of classical allusions and folk-melodies, far-fetched measures and slipshod versifying, deliberate affectation and indefinite charm. But, with all his April variety, as a lyrist he still falls short of the prismatic wantonness of Thomas Lodge. Lodge was a poet of a rare and delicate talent, wholly lacking in seriousness or passion, but a more deliberate artist than Greene. He transplants freely from the French, more often than not greatly improving on his originals, and he has the verbal dexterity and daintiness of Ronsard without his seriousness. The well-known madrigal of *Rosalind*, in which love appears as a kind of tickling, is perfect in its absolute harmony between form and content.

As fresh as Nash and as facile as Lodge, Breton approaches the latter in the careless vivacity with which he appears to prattle in verse. He scribbles incontinently, plays with words, defies grammar and logic, worries conceits to death, is always buoyant and artistic, and wonderfully seldom dull, considering how little he has to say. Read his honey-flowing seven-syllabled trochaics scattered about *The Passionate Shepherd* of 1604. They set the fashion to other heptasyllabic poets such as Wither before Carew and Waller made the fortune of octosyllabics. Breton captivates partly by his freshness and gaiety, partly by the genuine pleasure that he felt and conveyed in country hedges and blossoms. The ingenuity with which he rings the changes upon a few key-words in his composition is perfectly amazing. But preferable to these jugglings is a rippling movement such as the following, and in this kind he excels:

In the merry month of May,
On a morn by break of day,
Forth I walked by the woodside,
When as May was in his pride:
There I spied, all alone,
Phyllida and Corydon:
Much ado there was, God wot!
He would love and she would not.

A very similar note is struck in the pretty verses beginning "As it fell upon a day" by

¹ Whether he wrote them or not, let Prof. Feuillerat, the great expert on Lyly, to whom we are indebted for several hints in this chapter, eventually decide; Mr. Greg thinks they may have been by Dekker.

Richard Barnfield, a Staffordshire and Inns of Court gentleman who dedicated his *Affectionate Shepherd* (i.e. Daphnis sighing for the "love" of Ganymede) to Sidney's Lady Rich in 1594 and died at Shakespeare's age in 1627.

Barnfield's manner and his cloying sweetness were influenced apparently by Peele and by Shakespeare's narrative poems; two of his lyrical fragments were included as by Shakespeare, along with Marlowe's "Come live with me" and other popular strains, in Jaggard's miscellany, *The Passionate Pilgrim*, which was brought out in 1599.

As that Elizabethan nightingale's re-discoverer and editor, Mr. Bullen, remarks: "There are no sweeter lyrics in English poetry than are to be found in Campion's song-books." In the distinctive charm of his lyric, Campion¹ would seem almost to blend the grace and tenderness of Greene with Lyly's wealth of mythological illustration and the artless simplicity (which is often the highest art) of Lodge: in proof of which it might almost suffice to cite such numbers, no longer unfamiliar, as "Come, ye pretty false-eyed wanton," "O never to be moved, O beauty unrelenting," and "Shall I come, sweet love, to thee, when the evening beams are set." But Campion was also much more intellectual than the typical lyrist of his time. There is a sardonic note, a premonition of Donne, one might almost say of Heine, in stanzas such as "A secret love or two I must confess."

As a supplement to these miscellaneous lyrics may be mentioned the courtly verses of

a number of occasional amateurs in metre. Most of them are strictly occasional verses, inasmuch as their celebrity in nearly every case owes something to the circumstance either of the singer or the song. Such poems were Sir Walter Raleigh's reply to Marlowe's "Come live with me," his poem called *The Lie*, "Go, soul, the body's guest," his famous verse "Fain would I climb, yet fear I to fall," or his couplet on the snuff of a candle the night before he died.

Equally famous, incomparably more poetical, are Browne's epigram, or epitaph, on the Countess of Pembroke:

Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother . . . ;

and the romantic lines of the accomplished Sir Henry Wotton on his mistress, the Queen of Bohemia, "You meaner beauties of the night." Contrast is found in the still noted verses of Bacon, "The world's a bubble, and the life of man less than a span," which are hardly poetical at all, and are less essays in metre than metrical essays. Somewhat akin to these in clumsiness are the effusions of Thomas Lord Vaux on the contented mind and the instability of youth. There is more pith in the fancies of Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, and more still in the early but well-tuned and idly imitated "My mind to me a kingdom is" of Sir Edward Dyer. Fulke Greville, the ill-fated Earl of Essex, and Sir John Harrington, or Harington, the *enfant terrible* of palace circles, helped to make up the tale of these courtly poets.²

¹ Of Thomas Campion hardly anything is known save one or two friendships (Dowland and Nashe), and enmities (Barnes and Breton). His Latin *Poemata* appeared in 1595, but it is for his *Airs* of 1601 and 1613 that we cherish his memory. He was an excellent scholar, a writer on music, and a "Doctor of Physicke." Carried off, it would seem, by the plague on March 1st, 1620, he was buried in St. Dunstan's; hence a pleasing reference by Edmund Gosse to A. H. Bullen's efforts as rehabilitator of the poet-musician—

"Bullen, well done!

Where Campion lies in London-land,
Lulled by the thunders of the Strand,
Screened from the sun,

Surely there must

Now pass some pleasant gleam
Across his music-haunted dream,
Whose brain and lute are dust."

² On that incomparable Eros of literature, the Elizabethan Song, putting aside the earlier books of Ritson, Bellamy (the glee collector), Chappell and Rimbault, the interest of which is peculiar to the antiquary, the explorer should have recourse to the *Musa Madrigalesca* (1837) of Thomas Oliphant, and to Bullen's unrivalled series*: *Lyrics and More Lyrics* from Elizabethan Song-Books and *Lyrics from Elizabethan Romances*; his editions of *England's Helicon*, *Davison's Poetical Rhapsody*, and *Thomas Campion*, and his *Love Poems from Song-Books of the Seventeenth Century*. He may also consult with profit Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics** and Carpenter's *English Lyrics*. For a magisterial exposition on English sonneteering, especially in regard to its close dependence upon French and Italian models, see *Elizabethan Sonnets*,* ed. Sidney Lee (2 vols. in *An English Garner*).

CHAPTER VIII

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

"Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe."—BEN JONSON.

"Dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame."—MILTON.

"But Shakespeare's magic could not copy'd be,
Within that circle none durst walk but he."—DRYDEN.

"Our myriad-minded Shakespeare."—COLERIDGE.

"Shakespeare's mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see."—EMERSON.

Life at Stratford—The player—Early poems—First-fruits—The flowering period—Shakespeare and Scott—*Hamlet* and the great tragedies—Later years—Bibliographical summaries.

IF the name of Shakespeare had come up before a lord-lieutenant or a genealogist during the first thirty years of Elizabeth's reign, it would have been readily identified as that of a large family of small farmers in the midland counties. During the last fifteen years of the same reign the name (which finds its equivalent in the well-known Italian surname, Crollanza) was to acquire a celebrity which has given it a unique and almost sacrosanct significance from that day to this. As in the case of so many great men, the place and time of Shakespeare's nativity have been the subjects of much animated discussion, the echoes of which have by no means died away, even at the present day. It is generally believed, however, that Shakespeare was born in a roomy cottage neighbouring the site of what is now known as "Shakespeare's Birthplace," in Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon,¹ during the second half of April, 1564. His christening is thus entered in Church Latin in the baptismal register of the parish church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon: "1564, April 26th, Gulielmus filius Johannes Shakspeare." Of

Shakespeare's father, the said Johannes or John Shakespeare, we strive in vain to get a clear idea, based upon such facts as that he was a chief alderman of his native Stratford, that he married a rich wife, Mary Arden, daughter of Robert Arden of Wilmecote or Wilmcote, and begot a large family, that he apparently had heavy losses, was continually engaged in law-suits, but continued "merry-cheek'd," and, like Mr. Wilkins Micawber, was invincibly hopeful that something would turn up. John Shakespeare bought the Henley Street property in 1556 and brought his wife home there in the following year. Ten years later he was head bailiff of the town and welcomed the Queen's and other companies of players to Stratford. In 1575 he bought the house familiar to-day as the "Birthplace"; but from 1577 the fortunes of the once prosperous glover began to decline. Every long holiday that the eldest son spent at home from the Free Grammar School we can imagine him noticing that the family resources were steadily diminishing, while every year his father had in prospect some new law-suit or some new business scheme whereby the

¹ A small town of then about 1,300 inhabitants, clustered round the ford at which the ancient Roman street from Londinium to Uriconium crossed the Warwickshire Avon, though from about 1490 the road was carried over the river by a noble stone bridge (still standing), called after its builder, Sir Hugh Clopton. Legend says that the bard was born on the same day of the month that he died. We may safely drink to his memory on any day from the 20th to the 25th.



The Chandos Shakespeare.

finances of the Shakespeares were infallibly to be restored.

After a few years' subjection to the good pedagogue Walter Roche, Shakespeare had to leave his Latin book and the quaint gabled schoolroom with its rough desks and wooden beams, which still forms a most genuine attraction to all Stratford pilgrims—he had to quit these altogether, and rally to the help of his father in the humble trade to which all his great projects had reduced him, that of a common butcher.

John Aubrey, the first of our antiquaries who thought it worth while to record anecdotes about Shakespeare, when collecting materials (the product of a journey made to Stratford about 1662) for Anthony à Wood, wrote of the poet at this time: "His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours, that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade, but when he kill'd a calf he would doe it in high style, and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this towne that was held not at all inferior to him for naturall witt, his acquaintance and coetanean, but dyed young." These days in the slaughter-house must evidently have been to Shakespeare what those in the blacking factory were to Dickens. They begot in him an unconquerable determination to rise to a position of well-to-do respectability in the world.

A mile or two from Stratford is a hamlet named Shottery, accessible by a short walk through pleasant fields from the little town. Here, in a cottage of thatch, brick, and rubble which is still standing, lived Richard Hathaway, husbandman, and his daughter Anne. Shakespeare as a lad of eighteen must apparently have fallen in love with the maiden of twenty-five or six. According to an entry in the register of the Bishop of Worcester (Whitgift), a licence was granted on November 27th, 1582, for a marriage between William Shaxpere and Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton. On the following day (November 28th) a bond was entered into, in which two husbandmen of Stratford guaranteed the bishop against liability

for any objection that might be made against him (such as pre-contract or consanguinity) for allowing the contemplated marriage between William Shagspere and Anne Hathwey of Stratford-upon-Avon: provided, moreover, that Anne obtained the consent of her friends, the marriage was to be allowed to proceed with but once asking of the banns instead of the usual thrice.¹ Although at first sight the discrepancy in details appears to justify the opinion that different transactions are referred to, there are good reasons for the belief that both of the records relate to the licence for the poet's marriage, and that the entry in the bishop's register is incorrect, all the available evidence being in favour of the greater accuracy of the bond. The presumption is that the ceremony of marriage was precipitated; the view, however, that anything discreditable to Shakespeare or his wife is implied by the application for a licence is not sustained either by the documentary evidence or by a consideration of the known facts relating to the marriage. The urgency may have been dictated by a prospect of legal advantage, or by the poet's impending departure from Stratford. Aubrey "guessed" that he went to London "about eighteen" (1582). On the other hand legend hints that during the next three years or so Shakespeare endeavoured to gain his living as a lawyer's clerk and as a village schoolmaster. Aubrey, in his short account, expressly says "he understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger days a schoolmaster in the country." Whatever Shakespeare's chief means of subsistence may have been at the time—and there are reasons for supposing that he may have endeavoured to play more than one part—everything points to the fact that his chief relaxation was to be found in those sports of the country-side to which his country training and connections would naturally predispose him. Most notable, indeed, throughout Shakespeare's writings are the spontaneous and almost unconscious allusions to the minuter details of field sport. A poaching adventure is plausibly alleged to have been the immediate cause of his abandonment of Stratford. "He

¹ For obscure questions raised by Shakespeare's marriage, see C. I. Elton, *William Shakespeare: his Family and Friends*; and Joseph William Gray, *Shakespeare's Marriage*, 1905. The baptisms of his children are thus recorded in the Stratford registers: "1583. b. May 26, Susanna, daughter to William Shakspere." "1585. b. February 2, Hamnet and Judeth, sonne and daughter to William Shakspere." Hamnet, who died in August, 1596, was named after a neighbour, Hamnet Sadler, who was on March 25th, 1616, one of the signatories of Shakespeare's will.

had," wrote his first biographer, Nicholas Rowe, in 1709, "by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, among them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stalking, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London." Whether it be true or no, as a local parson, Richard Davies, who died in 1708, used to relate, that Lucy had Shakespeare whipped for his depredations, it is certain that Sir Thomas Lucy spoke in Parliament during 1585 on behalf of more stringent game laws, and that Shakespeare had a clear pas-sado at Sir Thomas in 1600 when he made Justice Shallow boast of the dozen white *lucuses* in his coat in proof of his ancient lineage. It is an old coat, comments Sir Hugh Evans, "the dozen white louses do become an old coat well." Soon afterwards Falstaff comes in, and Shallow taunts him with the very crimes which we know that the game-preserving old seigneur so keenly resented in "young Stratford."

"Knight, you have beaten my men, killed my deer, and have broken open my lodge," and he forthwith threatens to make a Privy Council matter of it. This was Sir Thomas Lucy all over, as Stratford archives attest.

Shakespeare must surely in July, 1575, have seen the revels at Kenilworth during the progress thither, when he was yet a boy, of the spectacle-loving Gloriana; and besides, he would be likely to have seen the old-fashioned miracle plays at Coventry, in addition to the repertoire of roving companies nearer home in guild-hall or market-square, by consent of the corporation of his native town. In 1587 no fewer than five companies of actors visited

Stratford. That his young aspirations should have been stirred by contact with a force so novel, so untried, yet so potent as the new drama obviously was, is not at all to be wondered at. It was a rare moment for art in England. The culture of the Renaissance was just blossoming here—in music, in poetic rhapsody, in lyrical effusions, in the rich embroidery of vernacular prose—under the protection of the short-lived Tudor despotism.

Whether Shakespeare joined a travelling company at Stratford, or trudged his way independently to London in 1586 to claim the hand of fellowship, it may be, from a fellow Stratfordian, Richard Field, a prosperous stationer of Blackfriars, can only be matter for conjecture; what is pretty certain is that he very soon gravitated to the theatre. Of the two chief companies in being at that time, the Queen's and the Earl of Leicester's, he became attached to the last-mentioned, and, if it were not already the best, he speedily made it so. Its headquarters were the Theater play-house, situated without the City, among fields in Shoreditch, but it moved several times¹ ere it settled, in 1599, at the Globe, on Bankside, Southwark, while its patronage passed from Leicester to Strange, and from Strange to Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain; hence it became known from 1594 as the Lord Chamberlain's company.² All the companies went on tour during the summer.

In however menial a capacity Shakespeare may first have assisted the theatrical company into which he was first admitted, it can hardly have been long before the intelligent members of it (among them Dick Burbage, Heminge, and Condell) discovered that they had to do with a youth of extraordinary promise. As Napoleon made suggestions at Toulon when he was merely a lieutenant, so Shakespeare may early have made suggestions the value of which instantaneously struck his superiors. That he would soon absorb all the romances and plays within his reach, and would most rapidly learn all that could be learned of the working of the theatre, may be regarded as certain. That a

¹ To the Curtain in Moorfields (hence Curtain Road), to the Rose on Bankside, and to Newington Butts. The patronage of the companies was traditional, the nominal patrons contributing little more than their names. In 1610-11 Shakespeare played occasionally at his company's second house, the Blackfriars, where *The Times* now stands. Shakespeare suffered loss, and the MSS. of his plays were probably destroyed in the fire at the Globe, which broke out when *Henry VIII.* was being performed in June, 1613.

² After James I.'s accession in May, 1603, they were promoted to be the King's Players, and acquired the rank of Grooms of the Royal Chamber.

time quickly came when plays would be put in his hands for suggestion or revision is very probable. He would soon perceive the characteristic defects of the plays which possessed the stage at the moment. The comedy was too academic (Lyly), the tragedy too full of rant and extravagance (Marlowe), the melodrama too sanguinary (Kyd), and the history too rude and archaic both in form and diction.

Of his early work as reviser and adapter, we have examples in *Henry VI.*, into the aridities of which he infused some life, humour, and poetry; *Titus Andronicus*, a perfect shambles of a play, over which he breathed a little country air; and *The Taming of the Shrew*, an old-fashioned farce of which he greatly enriched the humour. But from reviser of existing dramatic work he must have very rapidly risen to be author-in-chief of his company. An actor himself, no one so well as he could adapt a catching part to an individual performer. By 1590 the company's belief in "young Shakespeare" must have become a firm article of faith. He was now twenty-six, and was already becoming known rather widely, we can fancy, as a good-looking fellow, of astonishing quickness and talent, as a delightful companion of singularly attractive personality, and as a safe and resourceful, rather than as a particularly brilliant actor.¹ Shakespeare had started work as an adapter, and his first independent work is essentially adaptive and imitative. In the course of his revisions he must have got a considerable insight into the methods of such experienced playwrights as Greene and Peele, Gascoigne, Nash, Chettle, Whetstone, and Kyd. But the dramatists for whom he had a particular admiration were Lyly and Marlowe. Both of these writers were in the habit of borrowing their plots or fables from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid (the Elizabethan substitute for a Classical Dictionary), from *ben trovato* tales in popular chapbooks, or from the modern stories, novelle or historiettes, which had sprung up in Italy with Boccaccio and Bandello, and had been imitated and translated into every modern European tongue. Both, again, were extraordinarily fond of mythological ornament, and were never tired of introducing somewhat

hackneyed forms of classical imagery. With both these practices Shakespeare found it exceedingly convenient to comply. Judging by the evidence of his own writings and the statement of Aubrey, he had been well grounded in Ovid, and had the old *Sententiæ Pueriles* and *Colloquia*, and not a little of Mantuanus and Virgil besides, at his fingers' ends. In addition to which, the author of *The Comedy of Errors* may well have construed a play or two each by Plautus and Terence. Shakespeare had a sounder classical discipline than Molière, and *a fortiori* than Cervantes or the author of the *Ode to a Grecian Urn* (who got nearly all his "classics" from Lemprière); yet his "little Latin" must always be a stumbling-block to the pedants who, by a law of their being, insist that no one can be expected to write good English unless he can compose bad Latin!

Such then were the influences and the aspirations under the sway of which Shakespeare about 1590 put forth the first-fruits of his drama in sprightly comedies, such as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,² intermingled with the mirthful farce of *The Comedy of Errors*. In reality and charm they are far in advance already of the toylike frigidity of Lyly; full of rhyming and bickering and phrase-capping and rather vapid classical affectation (and other infallible signs of very early work) as they are, we can still detect in them the grace, the wit, and the fun which are to become so pre-eminent in Shakespearean comedy—all these are present, but present in embryo. These three plays mark Shakespeare's play-time. In *Richard III.* he indicates already his strong practical tendency; he writes a regular ranting play, very Marlowesque in character, and moreover a one-part play of a pattern that must have been dear indeed to a tragedy lead (such as Burbage, for instance). Its success on the boards was the foundation-stone of his fortune. In *King John* he makes another popular bid by addressing a play to the hot Protestant prejudice of the hour. It shows an advance upon *Richard III.* in the art of characterisation; but it is inferior as a work of poetic art to *Richard II.* The opening speech in *Richard III.* is a magnificent overture, but here in Gaunt's dying speech we

¹ The parts generally ascribed to him include the Ghost in *Hamlet*, Adam in *As You Like It*, several "kingly parts," a rôle in *Sejanus*, and old Knowell in *Every Man in his Humor*.

² The true spirit of humour enters our drama when Launce appears on the stage leading his dog with a string. The same dog was, no doubt, used by Starveling in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

get the full symphonic utterance of the new master:

This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,

This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,

This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Fear'd by their breed and famous for their birth.

Here too we get the first glimpse of the interest still taken by England in the strange and fluctuating history of the old dynastic feuds. They were to the youth of Shakespeare what the Jacobite stories of the *Tales of a Grandfather* were to the boyhood of Scott; and this series of plays, together with the novels of Scott, form the finest background for his historical consciousness that an English boy can well have. Shakespeare's princes and statesmen in their speeches seem to give us the very pith and marrow of history.

Hitherto, excellently though he was writing, Shakespeare had written nothing that would place his output much above the work of such a dramatist as Francis Beaumont. It is true that he had written two "honey-flowing" and highly decorative poems, the *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, full of sensuous beauty, showing that he had felt to the full that religion of Beauty which all highly impressionable youth must feel: these he had addressed in flowery language as the "first heir" of his "invention" to the young Earl of Southampton,¹ the handsomest and one of the richest men about the court, who was his special patron at the playhouse, and the addressee of many of the exquisite sonnets which he began writing soon after the publication of the poems in 1593-4. It is true, too, that he was beginning to be known and cordially disliked on account of his too rapid

rise. Greene, prematurely worn out with sedentary toil and incessant scribbling, did his best to give the young man a fall in his dying valediction (published by his friend Henry Chettle in September, 1592) called *A Groatworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*. Beware, he wrote, in effect, to his fellow-toilers, of this upstart antic, who decks himself in your plumes, and then jets and struts as if the whole theatre belonged to him alone, low-bred Johannes Factotum that he is. Shakespeare's rising consideration is shown by the fact that Greene's publisher, like the good, careful tradesman that he was, wrote at once to explain away his client's petulance, and to put on record without delay that Shakespeare was in reality the most obliging, the most favoured for his uprightness by "divers of worship," and the most admirable of men and players. He was, at any rate, the most able and capable of being one of the most formidable to a small man like Chettle. We come across several other contemporary sneers at Shakespeare's ambition, his snobbery in applying for a coat-of-arms, and his inordinate pride in buying the Big House in Stratford. But to such attacks Shakespeare never waited to reply or to retaliate; he was too busy and too successful. In March, 1594, by a warrant dated from Whitehall, Kemp, Shakespeare, Burbage and company were awarded £21 for "two comedies or enterludes [very probably *The Comedy of Errors* and *Love's Labour's Lost*] shewed before her Majestie at Christmas." *The Comedy of Errors* was given that same Christmas in Gray's Inn Hall. Henceforth Shakespeare's plays as given by the Burbage-Shakespeare combination were frequently commanded at court,² at

¹ Richard Field (a fellow-townsmen of Shakespeare) was the publisher of *Venus and Adonis*, which was licensed April 18th, 1593, and brought out next month at the "White Greyhound in Pauls Church-Yard": the dedication was signed "Your Honor's in all dutie, William Shakespeare." It proved enormously popular and went through seven editions in ten years. (For details of its debt to Ovid, Dolce, Tarchagnota, and Spenser's *Astrophel*, see *Shakespeare's Poems*, ed. Lee, 1905.) The remark of the coxcomb Gullio (a Slender in cap and gown) in the amusing students' play of *The Returne from Purnassus* (1599) gives us a notion of how its syrupy beauties were idolised by university wits. "O sweet Mr. Shakespeare! I'll have his picture in my study at the court. . . . Let the duncified age esteem of Spenser and Chaucer, I'll worship sweet Mr. Shakespeare, and to honour him will lay his *Venus and Adonis* under my pillow." In 1594 Richard Field printed *Lucrece*, also dedicated to Southampton, which Shakespeare modelled externally upon Samuel Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* in the rhyme-royal of Chaucer or seven-line stanza, as he had modelled *Venus and Adonis*, in six-line stanza, upon the *Scillas Metamorphosis* of Thomas Lodge. *Lucrece* proved nearly as popular as its predecessor (5th ed., 1616) and in 1598 in his *Poems in Divers Humours*, Richard Barnfield specially commended the "honey-flowing vein" of the poet—

"Whose Venus and whose Lucrece (sweet and chaste) | Thy Name in Fame's immortal Book have placed."

² A new record of a royal command to Shakespeare and Burbage to produce a play at court before James I., in return for an unusually substantial payment, has recently been discovered.

the Temple, at functions of the nobility, and elsewhere.

It was, in fact, during the next two years, 1594-6, that Shakespeare began in a marked degree to distance all competitors. For he wrote about this time *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, the first draft of *A Twelfth Night* (or *Love's Labour's Won*), and *The Merchant of Venice*. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a pastoral fairy-drama of the highest poetic beauty. In the loveliness of its lyrical music, and in that of its woodland, floral, hunting, and moonlight scenes, it has rivals only in *The Merchant*, *As You Like It*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Shakespeare may not improbably have played Theseus himself, and given utterance to that noble sentiment,

For never anything can be amiss
When simpleness and duty tender it;

and we have reason to be thankful that he had some good voices in the company who could sing “You spotted snakes,” and other such delightful lyrical fragments. As a whole the play is unique, and not one of Shakespeare's dramas is a more perfectly harmonious whole. It is the first of his plays which, from the first scene, in which Hermia is given her choice between marriage with Demetrius and

living a barren sister all her life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon,
to the last, in which the fairies dance at midnight in Theseus's palace, is unmistakably a work of genius.¹

Written probably when Shakespeare was about thirty, or even a little before, *Romeo and Juliet* is less flawless,² and less free from the preciousness of *Lyly* than the *Dream*, yet it must be considered upon the whole as a work of greater significance and moment. It is, indeed,

one of Shakespeare's most world-wide triumphs, nay more, it is the typical love tragedy of the world, for as Tennyson said, “No one has drawn the true passion of love” as Shakespeare has done here. How many love scenes has it inspired, from De Musset downwards? The nearest approach to it that we can think of is the love duet between Richard and Lucy in *Richard Feverel*. You feel at once what Shakespeare meant you to feel, that the culmination of the love of these two beautiful, ardent, and thrilling young human creatures is the object and climax of all existence. Yet with what finished art has Shakespeare provided relief for their simplex passion in the complex worldly wisdom of the Friar and the Nurse, and the transcendental wit of Mercutio! With what witchery of magic has he transformed and transfigured some of the oldest and most hackneyed lyrical motives, such as the declaration of love, the love soliloquy, and the dawn-song ere lovers part! This period of Shakespeare's work seems to us marked as no other by an air of conscious triumph in his mastery on the part of the artist, who was, had he known it, at the very point of the assumption of the primacy among all our poets. Of this period of fabulous growth and sunny realisation of power the most characteristic example, however, is *The Merchant of Venice*. To labour a tale of Arabian extravagance to anything like probability Shakespeare makes simply no attempt; in the style of play which he favoured he clung most tenaciously to the element of opera and the agency of miracle; but he revelled frankly in his newborn power, and gave his audience of his best. In Shylock, a man perverted to a base malignity by a just sense of racial wrong, he created his first really tragic figure, and he revealed to us for the first time the inmost soul of a complex man. Yet see how uncere-

¹ How beautifully the bewilderments of the night evaporate with the dawn! Theseus, the practical realist man, enters with his dogs and horses: straightway these beautiful images and hallucinations fade. Fairies! what nonsense! Dreams bodied forth by the lunatic, the lover and the poet, that is what they are! Observe that it is the clown Bottom who has seen the fairies, not the wise Theseus. The ending is practical and material—wedding, feasting, a right glorious evening, wassail and a pantomime. Theseus is right. But then Shakespeare prepares an exquisite surprise for us. These are fairies after all, for after they have all parted and said the last word, the fairies enter and dance a ringlet in the empty halls (music by Mendelssohn). This play helps us to realise Shakespeare's debt to an England alien and remote from the England of to-day, to the wellsprings of our ancient communistic literature, to the faery lore of still older races. Nothing he wrote is a more wonderful harmony of ancient mythology, English and Celtic folk-lore and Renaissance culture. For some suggestions here the writer is indebted to a delightful lecture delivered by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, though he fears that his recollections are sadly imperfect.

² There are occasional specimens of almost imbecile punning, and lapses here and there into a kind of taste which is quasi-barbaric.

moniously Shylock is shuffled off at the end of the fourth act, so as not to disturb the ravishing moonlight melodies which bring this miraculous and most typical play to a fitting close. This last act has always seemed to us absolutely transporting, suggestive in some complicated and far-off way of Watteau and of Persia, of stately terraces and old court costumes, of warm southern nights, of fountains splashing in the moonlight, of songs and silvery chimes and dance melodies, of the twanging of lutes and the twinkling of feet amidst the delicious perfumes of pinewoods in summer. It is hard to leave Belmont. There is enchantment in the very name!

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!

Shakespeare followed up these early comedies by that wonderful series of historical dramas, the two parts of *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.* (1597-9). Together these plays form an epic, rising at its close to an apotheosis of English might and achievement. In variety, interest, and power they are very far removed from his earlier efforts in historical drama; and borrowed wholesale though the material is from Holinshed, they are in reality among the most original of all his productions. In splendour of rhetoric, constructive skill, knowledge of life, characterisation, and creative humour (Falstaff), these plays show a marked advance upon anything that Shakespeare had yet done.¹ And here we must remark upon a peculiarity in Shakespeare's work as a whole, which differentiates it from that of almost all other artists in literature—its progressive character. Beginning with brilliant experiments and imitative

essays in drama, he reaches the limits of pure fancy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, scales the heights of observation of common life and sounds the depths of its humour in *Henry IV.*; leaves even this behind, and goes on to produce the perfect comedy of his *floreal* period (*As You Like It*, *All's Well*, *Much Ado*, and *Twelfth Night*), in which romance and reality, prismatic wit and genial humour, are so consummately blended²; passes on to unapproached altitudes in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Lear*; and, when it is apparently impossible that absolute power should increase, still widens his thought until, like an arctic midnight, it seems to combine the hues of sunset and of dawn in the sovereign serenity of *The Tempest*, passionless, but not less powerful than the greatest of his tragedies.

Before 1601 the genius of Shakespeare had but rarely travelled into the regions of the sublime or the mysterious. From this date onward, however, especially in the "great quadrilateral" of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Lear*, we are simply overwhelmed by tragical issues, terrible and profound, interrupted only by the irony of *Troilus and Cressida* and the speculations of *Measure for Measure*. Great resolutions (as in *Hamlet*) the mere plaything of accident; valour, in *Macbeth*, stooping to crime; honour and fidelity victims, in *Othello*, to bat-like suspicion; generosity betrayed to selfishness, great dominion to lust, legitimate pride to insensate passion, old age the resistless prey of vultures in human form, revenge, jealousy, the appalling "Tragedy of Sleep"—these are some of the themes.³ If we try to determine the reason for this persistent

¹ One of his best stage hits was the original prose farce of *The Merry Wives*; written hastily (so it is handed down) in fourteen days in order to exhibit Falstaff in a new light as a frustrate and befooled Don Juan. The most laughable and boisterous thing of its kind, it at the same time eclipses the contemporary *Every Man in his Humor* (1598) as a picture of manners, and illustrates to perfection Shakespeare's almost miraculous gift of changing the stops. On the complex character of Falstaff, see G. Radford (in *Obiter Dicta*, 1885, p. 200) and Maurice Morgann, *Character of Falstaff* (1777).

² The atmosphere of this *floreal* period (1599-1601) is delightfully suggested by Stopford Brooke in the opening sentences of his study of *As You Like It*. Shakespeare laughed out the title of this gay and graceful play one day "after reading what he had written. 'Take it as you like it, in whatever way it pleases you. Take its mirth or seriousness, its matter of thought or fancy, its grave or lively characters, its youthful love and self-conscious melancholy—take anything you like out of it. There is plenty to please all kinds. It is written for your pleasure.' The solemn professor, the most solid moralist, will not be able to assert that Shakespeare wrote this play with a moral purpose, or from a special desire to teach mankind. He wrote it as he liked it, for his own delight. He hoped men would listen to it for their pleasure, and take it just as they liked best to take it" (*Ten Plays of Shakespeare*, 1905).

³ A few essential features of the tragedy of Shakespeare may be observed. "It is invariably a tragedy of weakness. There is no instance in it of the struggle of a strong man against overwhelming circumstances, or the struggle of a good man against overwhelming evil. In no single instance does the hero's fall result from his own nobility of character or purpose—it is in every case the consequence of his own weakness or follies. Every one of the heroes of Shakespearean tragedy is a weak man. . . . Hamlet, the highest spirit

selection of tragic themes during the seven years that intervene between *Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus* (1601-8), we can do little more than take our choice between a growing sense of the waning romance of life and of the omnipresence of evil, the importunity of deeper problems, a changing mood in the audience no less than in its author, the activity of younger rivals, the clamour of “star” actors for bigger parts—last, but not least, the tariff question, the tidal influence of supply and demand. In these four plays Shakespeare left the zephyrs of light summer comedy for the storm-winds of tropical passion. They seem compounded of the elements. In *Hamlet* (1602) we first see that Shakespearean concentration, fusion, and balance which are so distinctive of Shakespeare and of Shakespeare alone. The drama is one of moods finding expression in passages which, so far as the experience of 300 years goes, have proved the most memorable in all literature. *Othello* (1604) is the most artistically coherent and the most intense of the four; it is, to our mind, the greatest of all stage plays, but it requires Titans as actors. With an Iago of a calibre equal to that of Salvini as Othello, the play would be almost too terrible to behold. *Macbeth* (1605?), fragmentary though it be, is the most picturesque and imaginative of all modern dramas. To the actor it has proved murderously and fatally irresistible, for it is the least playable of dramas, and essentially, as Johnson said, a play for the closet. *Lear* (1606) is the grandest, the largest, and the most sublime of all Shakespeare’s dramas, and in its entirety is almost too vast to be fully

comprehended. This is not because anything in *Lear* is obscure, or far-fetched, or unintelligible—Shakespeare is never metaphysical or mystical; his best things are three parts truism, and what makes the mintage Shakespearean is the perfection of the die from which he strikes the thoughts of Everyman—but it is by means of the grouping and collocation of circumstances and by the lightning play of Nemesis that Shakespeare renders *Lear* so universally overwhelming. One feels of it at times almost as Johnson felt of Burke once, “If I had to read *Lear* now, it would kill me.”

In none of these plays is there anything approaching to self-revelation. We can never feel sure how Shakespeare felt towards any of his characters. No great writer, if we put aside Homer, reveals so little of himself in his writings. In *Hamlet*, it is true, we get some trace of his professional views and a slight gust of one of the storms that troubled his professional career.¹ In *Ulysses* it is possible that we get Shakespeare’s own conception of subordination as the axis of human society:

The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre
Observe degree, priority and place. . . .
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And, hark, what discord follows!

In *Coriolanus*, again, taken in connection with what has gone before, we seem to get just a hint of Shakespeare’s political antipathy—Demos. A mob to him (like a motor with us) was a thing inseparable from an evil smell, a thing most rank and corrupt, both literally and metaphorically. Shakespeare was, in the

of them all, fails least. He at least in a fashion does his work. Nor is the theme of this tragedy in any case a moral struggle against what is called temptation. The themes chosen are not ethical in any distinctive sense. Love again plays a comparatively small part in Shakespearean tragedy. . . .” It would be rash to draw very positive conclusions from these facts, but they are suggestive. Shakespeare was an idealistic artist, but he lived in the centre of the actual. Now the tragedy of moral struggle, or of heroic failure, or of love are things comparatively rare, but the tragedy of weakness is—everywhere. But the tragedy of mere weakness is apt to be sordid. That it is never so in Shakespeare is due to the dramatist’s characteristic love of intensity in human character. Shakespeare’s tragic heroes, though none of them are heroic, are none of them mediocre; all are finely or even splendidly endowed. Every one of them has great qualities, and most of them are men of conspicuous intellect. See *The Age of Shakespeare*, vol. ii. pp. 85-6.

¹ The rivalry in “classical” plays between Shakespeare and his friend Ben Jonson, and the bitter feud (in which Jonson was also closely involved) between the adult and boy actors. For an illuminating account of this, and in regard to the amount of self-revelation in the *Sonnets*, see Sidney Lee’s *Life of Shakespeare*. Mr. Lee holds that this amount has been unduly exaggerated. It may be that he goes rather too far in the opposite direction; but there can be no doubt of the great service he has done in demolishing the superstructure of fable about the dedication of the *Sonnets* as issued in 1609. The book, as was common in those days, was published without the author’s permission by a stationer “in the street,” one Thomas Thorpe; and the “dark” dedication was merely a more or less hackneyed trade compliment which one of these pushful book-pirates (with a lively anticipation of favours to come in return) was in the habit of paying to another member of the same confraternity. See *Poems of Shakespeare* (1905, Oxf. Univ. Press).

best sense of the word, essentially an aristocrat, and it is instructive to see how writers of a democratic humour have shown an instinctive dislike of him. Bunyan had probably never heard of him, but Swift and Defoe mistrusted him; and Goldsmith, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, attributes a taste for "Shakespeare and the musical glasses" to the sham refinement of Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs; Burns preferred *Douglas* to *Macbeth*; and Tolstoi would put Schiller or Ibsen above the author of *Hamlet*; while Cobbett, with his usual *sans gêne*, speaks of Shakespeare as "a punster and a smutster" and a "great snob" for making paladins of the two young peasants in *Cymbeline*, owing to the mere fact that royal blood coursed secretly in their veins.

It remains true that Shakespeare is inscrutable,—he "ne'er left his bosom's gate ajar"; yet he is not so wholly elusive as Matthew Arnold would have us believe;¹ nor can the patient and attentive student by means of negative and analogical processes fail to discern at least some traces of the distinctive lineaments of his genius. Like not a few of the greatest creators of world-literature, Cervantes, Molière, Scott, Shakespeare was not a self-conscious artist. His literary work, conceived as he pursued a round of avocations that would have quite sufficiently absorbed a more than ordinary successful man of talent, must have found expression and taken form, without extraordinary elaboration, but with a perfectly amazing rapidity. He was evidently no eccentric; to the exhaustion incident upon preliminary labours which has sterilised so many men of first-rate talent he was obviously a stranger; of the seclusion which so many deem indispensable to perform intellectual labour he was manifestly oblivious. The inner necessity that prompted him to such work as he performed must have been strong—nay, overpowering. As with Sir Walter Scott or Napoleon I., the ostensible pretext (even to himself) for an amount of effort that may well seem to us superhuman was the alleged necessity of building up a property, an ancestral mansion, or an empire—in each case for phantom heirs to inherit. In each case, in strict reality, the work must have been its own stimulus and its achievement the main, truly substantial, reward. As in the case of Scott, we have contemporary evidence which seems to

us to point decisively to Shakespeare's exceptional sociability and to the sweetness and serenity of his temper. Apart from his work, however, there is no necessity for believing that Shakespeare was in the ordinary traffic of human intercourse (any more than Scott) an exceptionally brilliant man. Fuller's brilliant word-picture of Ben Jonson as conversationally a solid high-built Spanish galleon, and Shakespeare as a trim English man-of-war, taking advantage of every wind, and sailing round and round his adversary by sheer quickness of wit and invention, was, we must remember, a purely imaginary one printed after the Restoration. Had Shakespeare really excelled so greatly in conversation as his great contemporary Jonson, or Ben's still more illustrious namesake the incomparable Doctor of a later age, we could hardly have failed to have specific reference to such a talent. Ben Jonson, for instance, in his *Timber* (published 1641), in which he so cordially praises his old rival, as "honest and of an open nature," a man to be loved, and his memory honoured "on this side idolatry," never thinks of comparing him as a talker with Lord Bacon, whose discourse was such that "a hearer could not cough or look aside from him without loss." In Shakespeare's case, as in that of so many typical men of letters, we are prepared to believe that the faculty of expression was by a subtle alchemy transmuted and the man himself, as it were, transfigured by the magic of the pen.

To continue the process of analogy: Shakespeare, like other men of genius who stand nearest in relation to his particular stamp, borrowed materials very freely, but imitated in the strictest sense very little. Of the distilling process, and sedulous imitation of artistic effects as practised by such masters as Milton and Tennyson, he was altogether innocent. His art, we may say in fine, was consistently more of the subconscious than of the self-conscious order.

Once more, it seems to us, does Shakespeare resemble Scott in his master qualities of humour, reality of observation, and constructive imagination. Beside his Richards and Henries, as beside the James I. and Louis XI. of Sir Walter, how shadowy and faint do most elaborate historical portraits appear, even those of a Motley or Macaulay! The humorous figures of his comedy—veritable giants, some of these—stand equally apart: Falstaff,

¹ "Others abide our question. Thou art free." "Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure."



From a Painting by Daniel Maclise, R.A.

Malvolio and the Countess.
Twelfth Night, Act iii, Sc. 4.

Autolycus, Bottom, Dogberry, Sir Toby, unrivalled, perhaps, in any literature, unapproached in English, save only by Sterne and Dickens. The same in even a greater degree applies to his tragic figures, Antony and Cleopatra, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Isabella and Claudio, Othello and Iago, for instance. Reflect only for a moment on the energy, the brain power, the passion, the throbbing humanity in the contrast between these last two characters alone; and then the extraordinary and lifelike vividness with which the crisis of those two men's lives and those of the group depending on them are adapted and concentrated into two brief hours of stage dialogue and the successive fevers of delight, anxiety, wrath, dismay, and anguish excited in the mind of every spectator who possesses a heart and a brain. Where out of Shakespeare can this overpowering effect upon the imagination of man be approached? Macaulay cannot be far wrong when he says, “This play of love and jealousy is the master-work of the whole world.” Shakespeare added to all these qualities, as we have seen, an almost superabundant wit. He abused the gift sometimes, it cannot be denied. On the other hand, we must remember that many of his jests (such as those in *Much Ado* and *Twelfth Night*), now decidedly obscure, were momentarily the most exquisite of all, the most topical, and consequently the most highly relished at the time. Out of a play, more than almost every form of literary composition, virtue inevitably evaporates with the lapse of time. But for the most part Shakespeare's wit is still pregnant in the highest sense, and reminds the reader of Porson's saying, “Wit is in general the finest sense in the world.” “Wit and Truth (true reasoning) I discovered to be one and the same.”

So completely free is Shakespeare from the meshes of anything approaching a philosophical system, that one would hesitate to pronounce him definitely either an optimist or a pessimist. For “utter freedom of thought,” as Goethe observed, not infrequently in the direction of irony and cynicism, it is difficult to surpass some passages in *Troilus and Cressida*; while speeches in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are indicative in the strongest way of a deep-seated weariness and nausea of the self-complacent optimism of every-day respectability and worldly success. A rather gloomy philosophy of life, by no means wholly free from fatalism, emerges from

such plays as *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, and even *Romeo and Juliet*, in which the most vital issues are shown to be woven inextricably into the merest chapter of accidents. Shakespeare had seen too much of life at first hand to ignore or underrate the value of luck. But in his most typical moods, especially, perhaps, in his later plays, what amazes us is the centrality and the serenity of his point of view. Shakespeare—this one point is clear—had always been a clean and strenuous worker. The incentive to be active and to *do* things had kept him out of the dark corners which are as likely eventually to warp the artist as to dissolve the man. Charles Lamb was fortunate in his epithet when he wrote of Shakespeare's plays as “this manly book.” Of the sickly, decadent “cast of thought” which has come to pervade so much of our literature, there is absolutely no trace in Shakespeare. Such modern subjects as ugly disease and painful mediocrity, the *bête humaine* or the hideous lusts and morbidities which humanity in all ages has shrouded—such subjects were wholly foreign to Shakespeare's psychological palette. Enormously liberal as he was in almost every way, he yet had a thoroughly healthy dislike of the abnormal. The *lusus naturæ* had not superlative attraction for him; his choice of theme was reserved for strong, potent, and energetic types of the human species.

Nor has he much tolerance in practical things for the blurring of the line of demarcation between good and evil: they appeared to him in a well enough defined contrast, and the absolute triumph of evil or wickedness must clearly have appeared to him something in the nature of the abnormal. He faces such problems squarely, for there is in him none of that pre-occupation with and insistence upon the beauty of nature upon which modern poets harp. “What he loves as an artist is power—intensity—in human character. It may be power of intellect or moral power, or power of passion or of grace, or the intensity of the exquisite as in Ariel, or power of love as in Imogen, or power of wit as in Benedick, or intensity of stupidity as in Sir Andrew Aguecheek, whose silliness approaches the sublime; but it is always the intense, the perfect in some kind, that he dwells upon and makes central. Splendid and puissant personalities are the primary material of his tragedies, giants of wit or silliness of his comedy. If we put

aside the morbid, there is only one form of the extreme in human character which he practically never makes use of, and that is the extremely brutal. The merely bestial he disregards entirely. Yet his characters, splendid or extreme as they are, are never extravagant or abnormal in their nature; they are rather perfected types of the normal. We may fairly say that Shakespeare sought for the highest expressions of the normal in humanity. But of mere mediocrities Shakespeare makes but little use. He relegates them to the background, and uses them as foils and explanatory notes. Mediocrity may be complex; but Shakespeare has not the modern love of the complex as such, though he masters it when he pleases. He prefers a complexity that is not commonplace, like that of Hamlet. Mediocrity may be tragic or pathetic; but Shakespeare prefers the pathos of Imogen and the tragedy of Lear. The man who is dull, but not dull enough to be altogether laughable, the man whose summed virtues make up respectability, whose actions are reducible to fear, who can neither dare nor enjoy freely, is not a subject of Shakespeare's art. He is included and passed over."¹ The test of his writing is that it braces us for effort, enlarges our thoughts towards charity, and ennobles our feelings. Enrichers of the fancy, Charles Lamb calls these plays, "strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts and actions, to teach courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity: for of examples teaching these virtues his pages are full." No one is debased or depressed by Shakespeare, for there is nothing base or cowardly in him. His are the darkness and terror of crag and precipice, and his, too, the exhilaration of the summits.

Coriolanus was one of three plays in which Shakespeare used Plutarch as a prop as he had previously used Holinshed, probably with the intention of saving himself trouble, and

merely dramatising historical narratives. But in every case (especially that of *Antony and Cleopatra*,² which combines the highest qualities of history and tragedy with an alacrity in careless construction that is truly Shakespearean) he was caught in the web of his own imagination, and irresistibly impelled in view of the climax to put forth the full strength that was in him. After *Coriolanus*, Shakespeare's pre-occupation with the gravest issues ends, and he creates for us a new type of play—the "romance" (*Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, *Tempest*, 1610-12), in the direction of which it is possible that his mind may have been turned by the immense success of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*. Finally, on the eve of his retirement in 1612-13, he wrote some scenes for a pageant play of *Henry VIII.*, and a few shreds³ to be woven into the texture of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, by John Fletcher (who was now thirty-four to his forty-nine), the rising hope and crown prince, as it were, both of the "company" and the play-going circle of which Will Shakespeare had so long been the undisputed *roi-soleil*. Stratford and rest at last! He had realised the most normal ambition of the strong man—returning to the home of his youth with the fortune that he had made in the centre of competition. His balance was drawn. He had written "settled" at the foot of the account, and we know what his old player-comrades thought of him: "Our Shakespeare," "so worthy a friend and fellow,"

Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear!

"Of Shakespeare, *our countryman*," wrote his rival Ben Jonson, with honest pride,

I loved the man, and do honour his memory. . . .
Soule of the Age

The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage.

All the time that he was producing his early masterpieces, by which in his capacity as author he is estimated to have earned some £20 a

¹ *Age of Shakespeare*, vol. ii. pp. 127-8.

² *Antony and Cleopatra* is perhaps only not the greatest of all Shakespeare's tragedies because the theme is smaller and has less reach than the themes of *Hamlet* or *Lear*, and because it is perhaps exceptionally lacking in concentration and unity. In *Pericles* and *Timon* of near this same date (1607-9) we are surprised a little to find Shakespeare recurring to his earlier manner of somewhat breathless and haphazard collaboration.

³ Including, we are fain to believe, the opening song, "Roses, their sharp spines being gone," which seems not unworthy of a place in the exquisite nosegay of Shakespeare songs, embracing as this does:—

"O mistress mine, where are you roaming?"
"Fear no more the heat of the sun,"
"Where the bee sucks,"
"Sigh no more, ladies,"

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind,"
"Take, O take those lips away,"
"Full fathom five," and
"Hark, hark, the lark at heaven's gate sings."

year,¹ Shakespeare in his capacity of actor was effectively hoarding money.

In 1597 he bought for £60 the largest house in Stratford, known as New Place, "a pratty house of bricke and tymbre," built for Sir Hugh Clopton in 1496. The lack of repair accounted for the low price. The house was occupied by Queen Henrietta Maria and her suite for three weeks during 1643; but the foundations of the mansion are unhappily all that at present remain. Henceforth we have plentiful details of the dramatist's investments in land at Stratford, of his purchase of the local tithes, of his lawsuits with debtors and others,² and of his good fortune in securing two proprietary shares in the Globe Theatre (worth £200 a year each). As Bagehot remarked, "The reverential character of Englishmen has carefully preserved what they thought the great excellence of their poet, that he made a fortune." In 1615 "Willi. Shakespeare, gentleman," is registered in Stow's *Annales* as one of the most excellent of present poets. The poet's only son, Hamnet, was buried at Stratford in 1596. The theory that Shakespeare was long separated from his family is gratuitous, but it is reasonable to believe that from this date onwards new ties arose to knit him to Stratford,³ and after his retirement he settled there, having disposed of his theatre shares, and sunk nearly all his capital in house property and real estate in his native town. He was keenly interested in the domestic affairs of his two daughters; the eldest, Susanna (his heiress), had married in 1607 John Hall, a rising physician, of Puritan leanings, by whom she had, in 1608, a daughter, Elizabeth, the poet's only grandchild that lived to maturity.⁴ The younger daughter, Judith, married in February, 1616, a Stratford vintner named Thomas Quiney, and Shakespeare is said to

have made merry at her wedding; she survived the Restoration, dying at Stratford February 9th, 1662. The increasing Puritan atmosphere of the place must have been rather oppressive to the poet. By 1622 the Stratford town council were so square-toed that they actually bribed the King's Players (Shakespeare's old company) to leave the place without giving a performance!

The precise manner of the poet's death is uncertain. His will, still preserved in the Prerogative Office, London, is dated March 25th, 1616. His handwriting—never at all good, if we may judge from the five signatures that have been preserved—is feeble, shaky, and imperfect. In estimating his orthography, however, we must remember that he learned handwriting when that art was at its nadir in England, long after the good old legal hand had gone out, and before the fine Italian penmanship had come in, and when the terrors of abbreviations and parafes were in full swing. His death did not occur until April 23rd, just four weeks after the signature of the will (he was buried on the 25th); this interval impairs the tradition circulated fifty years later, that the poet died of a fever contracted at a merry meeting with Drayton and Ben Jonson. The burial of Chaucer in Westminster Abbey was a more or less accidental circumstance; but the interment of Spenser and Beaumont near his ashes had given a new sanction in Elizabethan times to the idea that the Abbey might become in time a kind of Santa Croce of English poets. So within six years of Shakespeare's death we get the pastoral poet William Basse lamenting the exile of Shakespeare's bones in distant Stratford:

Renowned Spenser, lie a thought more nigh
To learned Beaumont; and rare Beaumont, lie
A little nearer Chaucer, to make room
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb.

¹ Multiply by at least six to bring to modern values. As a player between 1590 and 1599 Mr. Sidney Lee estimates that Shakespeare made, on the average, £115 per annum (*Life of Shakespeare*, Library Edition, p. 159).

² "As is common among men of wealth," says Mr. Lee, "Shakespeare stood rigorously by his rights in all business relations, and often appeared as plaintiff in the local courts."

³ The poet's father, whose finances his prosperous son is believed to have eased considerably, died in 1601, when Shakespeare became the head of the family; his mother, "Mary Shaxspere," seven years later (Sept. 1608); his younger brother Edmund, who, like himself, was an actor, was buried in Southwark, in December, 1607.

⁴ This Elizabeth married as her second husband, in 1647, Sir John Barnard, of Abington, near Northampton, and at her death in February, 1670, she was the last surviving descendant of the poet, whose Stratford property she had inherited just previously to her second marriage. The poet's own widow, Anne Shakespeare, died on August 6th, 1623, *æt.* 67. She was buried near her husband (though not in the same grave) in the Stratford chancel. John Hall's very curious medical *Observations* were issued posthumously in 1657.

These lines appealed strongly to the imagination of contemporaries. Ben Jonson, writing in the following year, repudiated the idea of "bidding Beaumont lie a little further," for he said, addressing Shakespeare, "Thou art a monument, without a tomb." Sepulchred in his works, Shakespeare, as Milton claimed, with a glance back at the same sonnet,

in such pomp dost lie

That kings for such a tomb would wish to die;
and Basse's own ultimate wish is that probably shared by the great multitude of the dramatist's worshippers,

Sleep, brave Tragedian, Shakespeare, sleep alone.

It was not until the subsequent interments of Drayton and Ben Jonson that the neighbourhood of Chaucer's monument in the Abbey became definitely consecrated as "Poets' Corner."

Shakespeare's bust¹ above the tomb, on the north chancel wall of Stratford Church (erected by the family within six years of his decease), and his portrait engraved by Martin Droeshout prefixed to the first folio edition of his works in 1623 (which, as interpreted to some extent by the so-called Droeshout painting at Stratford, seem to us the most interesting and probably authentic of the portraits) confirm in a general way Aubrey's statement that Shakespeare was "a handsome well-shap't man." If the opinion of competent judges may be taken, the bust was executed from a cast taken after death. The colours, renewed in 1749, were originally taken from life, and, until whitewashed in

1793 (owing to the unpardonable presumption of Malone), represented the poet exactly as he appeared to his contemporaries. The large dome-shaped forehead is the most striking feature of the image, the colours of which were restored in 1861. The eyes are a bright hazel, the hair and beard auburn; the doublet scarlet, covered with a loose black sleeveless gown. Shakespeare's hands, in one of which is a quill, repose on a cushion, and beneath this is an inscription in indifferent Latin, likening Shakespeare to a Nestor for judgment, a Socrates for genius,² and a Virgil for art:

Judicio Pylum, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

Then come three couplets in English:

Stay, passenger, why goest thou by so fast?

Read, if thou canst, whom envious Death hath placed

Within this monument; Shakespeare: with whom
Quick nature died; whose name doth deck this tomb

Far more than cost; sith all that he hath writ
Leaves living art but page to serve his wit;

while on the ground above the grave itself, near the north wall of the chancel, is the well-known *siste viator* appeal to the sexton:

Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear

To digg the dost enclosed heare;

Blest be Ye man Yt spares thes stones,

And corst be he Yt moves my bones.

The poet died within a few days of the immortal author of *Don Quixote*; he had just completed his fifty-second year, and was thus of the same age as Molière and Napoleon.

DURING the years of his active career Shakespeare's sole preoccupation in regard to his plays would appear to have been to provide for their adequate production upon the stage of the Globe Theatre on Bankside. He did not cause them to be published either singly or collectively. When unauthenticated copies were printed without his permission he took no active steps against the offenders, and he did nothing whatever to substitute correct editions for the garbled versions that were constantly emanating from the press. Having regard to the abnormal supineness of Shakespeare in respect to the rights and responsibilities of authorship, it can hardly be doubted that we owe a heavy debt to the depredatory printers who flourished so exceedingly in London during the last ten years of Queen Elizabeth and the first ten years of King James. London was teeming with competitive stationers and printer-publishers, eager to acquire saleable raw material, but unwilling (in the then wholly vague state of ideas upon the subject of copyright) to give more than the merest trifle for a manuscript, however promising. There were scarcely any English classics to fall back upon, and no newspaper reports of speeches by eminent contemporary statesmen. It was quite natural in the circumstances that the publishers should have turned their eyes to the theatres on the south side where the plays of a young man of but thirty-three or thirty-four were already becoming town talk. "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines," wrote one of the most wide-awake literary quidnuncs of the day, "so Shakespeare among ye English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy witnes his *Gentlemen of Verona*,

¹ Executed by a well-known London sculptor of Dutch extraction named Gerard Johnson. The original pen and first finger (prey of some harpy) have been restored; otherwise the bust is substantially unchanged since its erection about 1620. William Morris laughs at the Droeshout picture: "It can't be like Shakespeare, because it isn't like a man." The "Felton" portrait, in my opinion, deserves more study than it has yet been accorded.

² A reference is intended no doubt to the familiar *daimon* of Socrates.



From a Painting by Daniel MacLise, R.A.

The Play Scene.
Hamlet, Act ii, Sc. 2.

his *Errors*, his *Love Labours Lost*, his *Love Labours Wonne*, his *Midsummers Night Dreame*, and his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2*, *Richard the 3*, *Henry the 4*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo and Juliet*."¹ It must have become perfectly obvious a year or two before this *obiter dictum* was uttered that Shakespeare was a thoroughly "good thing"; he might prove a mine of wealth to a successful piratical printer. The question was how to get hold of a copy of a likely play. The original manuscript would be jealously guarded by the theatre proprietors. Two courses would appear to have presented themselves to piratical adventurers, zealous and willing to surmount any obstacle. One was to get at either an impoverished actor or some one behind the scenes at the Globe and persuade him to procure an acting copy: another was to send reporters to the theatre and get them to take down an outline in rough shorthand. The two methods were in some cases very probably combined. An actor for a small fee would furnish two or three parts in full, the remainder would be patched together and pieced in by the publisher's hack, after two or three visits to the playhouse. The resultant (from some such processes as these) was hurried through the press and sold broadcast at the rate of fivepence or sixpence a copy. The circulation must have been rapid and extensive, but so fugitive is literature of this kind that at the present day a Shakespeare quarto hardly ever comes into the market, and when it does it fetches an enormous price.² The only really good collections are in the British Museum and the Bodleian, and in the libraries of the Duke of Devonshire and Trinity College, Cambridge.

The quartos vary greatly in merit, but none of them can claim to be very correct. In no case can we suppose one to have been corrected by a thoroughly competent hand, still less by Shakespeare himself. Corrections of proofs by authors does not appear to have been an ordinary practice in Elizabeth's time, but, even if it had, we could hardly expect Shakespeare to have corrected playbooks issued in defiance of his wishes. Once printed, the publishers seem to have taken no further pains about securing completeness or accuracy. As a rule each succeeding quarto was printed off from the one next preceding it. Such corrections as were made were executed by ignorant and irresponsible hands, fresh blunders crept in, and the text deteriorated steadily. Such as they were, these quarto playbooks were the only form in which the dramatist was accessible to readers down to 1623. They are consequently very important. Appended is a list of the first quarto editions of single plays between 1597 and the appearance of the first folio in 1623; an attempt has further been made to indicate the relations which the quartos bear one to another, and to the collective edition of Shakespeare's plays in folio in 1623.

(1) *An Excellent conceited Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet*, 1597. The first quarto, an imperfect shortened and unauthorised reporter's draft, was "newly corrected, augmented and amended" in 1599. This latter is a vastly improved text of a play which had probably been strengthened in the interval. From it was printed the third quarto (Q3) in 1609. From this last the folio version was derived with changes usually for the worse. There is a fourth quarto, undated, with useful corrections; and a fifth, dated 1637. The received text is largely that of the last quarto, but is in many places conjectural.

(2) *The Tragedy of King Richard the third. Containing his treacherous plots . . . with the whole course of his detested life and most deserved death*, 1597. The first quarto appears to have been (though the point is very obscure) a shortened and revised copy of the original play, of which we get the nearest idea in the 1623 or folio version. Subsequent quartos appeared 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612, 1622, 1629, 1634, each for the most part copying its predecessor and progressively deteriorating. The *textus receptus* is based on the folio with substantial additions from Q1. The modern texts vary a good deal.

(3) *The Tragedie of King Richard the Second*, 1597. Reprinted 1598, with some blunders added, and again, with additions (the deposition scene), in 1608. The 1608 quarto was issued first with a title-page not mentioning the additions, then with a title-page in which they are mentioned. The fourth quarto of 1615, used in printing the folio text, is a mere reprint of that of 1608, but the copy used was corrected, in MS., by a good acting copy, and the folio is thus purged of many errors accumulated by successive quartos, and is on the whole the best text. The 1634 quarto was printed from the second folio (F2).

(4) *A Pleasant Conceited Comedie called Love's labors Lost . . . newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespeare*, 1598. The folio version is a reprint from this (Q1) divided into acts. Both versions contain mistakes of their own, but the folio is rather more carefully printed. Q2 was printed from F1 in 1631.

(5) *The Historie of Henrie the fourth with the battell at Shrewsburie . . . with the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstaffe*, 1598. This is the standard text of the play, and was reprinted in successive quartos 1599, 1604, 1608, 1613, 1622, 1632, and 1639. The folio differs from the quartos for the worse, though it corrects a few typographical errors and has a division into acts and scenes.

(6) *The Second part of Henrie the fourth . . . with the humours of Sir John Falstaffe and swaggering Pistoll*, 1600. The *textus receptus* is a combination of the quarto and the folio version, which supplement each other in a valuable manner, the former probably representing the purer and less sophisticated text, the latter contributing some fine additional lines.

¹ Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia*, 1598. *Love's Labour's Won* has been supposed to be a first draft of the play restyled *All's Well that Ends Well* (Dr. Farmer); *The Tempest* (Rev. Jos. Hunter); *Much Ado* (A. E. Brae); *Taming of the Shrew* (G. L. Craik).

² The Lund quarto of *Titus Andronicus*, 1594, was sold to America in January, 1905, for £2,000. Concerning the author of this play, consult John M. Robertson's *Did Shakespeare write Titus Andronicus?** He finds strong traces of Greene and Peele (possibly Kyd) in the play, but very little of Shakespeare. Cf. Grosart's edition of *Selimus* (Temple Classics).

(7) *The Chronicle History of Henry the fift. With his battel fought at Agin Court in France . . .* 1600 (Q2 1602, Q3 1608). The quartos alike are imperfect and almost valueless for comparison. They were probably vamped up from notes taken at a performance of the play in a shortened form. The folio supplies the *textus receptus*.

(8) *The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice. With the extreame crueltie of Shylocke . . .* 1600 (Roberts Q1) and 1600 (Heyes Q2): two versions distinguished by the rival publishers' names. "Notwithstanding some worsenesses," says Dr. Furnivall, "the betterness of the second quarto is established." From it the first folio text was printed in 1623, with a few insignificant corrections and some added blunders. The "Heyes" quarto was reprinted in 1637 (Q3); reissued with new title-page in 1652 (Q4).

(9) *Much adoe About Nothing*, 1600. The folio version is a reprint of this, with alterations and blunders as usual, and with the acts marked for the first time.

(10) *A Midsummer nights dreame*, 1600. Two quartos were printed in this year, one by Fisher (Q1), the other by James Roberts (Q2). The folio text is based on the latter (which is better printed if less authentic), with some conjectural alterations. The received text is a combination.

(11) *A most pleasurint and excellent conceited Comedie of Syr John Falstaffe and the merrie Wives of Windsor . . .* 1602. This version and that of the folio convict each other of serious imperfections. Both probably derive from a common original no longer extant. The modern text, as is not infrequently the case, represents a degradation of the author's work. The quarto version is probably a report by a literary hack from a shortened stage version. Q2 (1619), a reprint of Q1, was followed by Q3 (1630), a reprint from the folio. The *textus receptus* is mainly that of the folio.

(12) *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet Prince of Denmarke*, by William Shake-speare, 1603. This version (Q1) is a piratical and carelessly transcribed copy of Shakespeare's first draft of the play, in which the dramatist drew largely upon an old piece called *Hamlet's Revenge*. A revised version greatly enlarged and amended "according to the true and perfect copy" appeared in 1604 (Q2). This again was roughly printed from a curtailed acting copy. The folio text came nearer to the original; it also followed an acting copy which had been cut down for representation, but the cuts were less drastic and in different places as compared with those of Q2. The *textus receptus*, long based upon F1 almost exclusively, is now based upon a combination of it and Q2. Later quartos appeared in 1605, 1611, an undated quarto (Q5) about 1615, and 1637 (Q6).

(13) *Mr. William Shake-speare: His True Chronicle Historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters*, 1608, two quarto editions, both printed for N. Butter. The first, known as the "Pide Bull" edition, was made up of corrected and uncorrected sheets indiscriminately, so that scarcely two copies are alike in all respects. The second, known as the "N. Butter" edition, is a reprint of a copy of the first which contained some of the uncorrected sheets. A third quarto, 1655, is a bad reprint of the second. The folio text is somewhat shorter but very superior to quartos: it was probably printed from one of them, heavily corrected from a manuscript in possession of the theatre.

(14) *The (Famous) Historie of Troylus and Cresseid* (Excellently expressing the beginning of their loves with the conceited wooing of Pandarus Prince of Licia) as it was acted at the Globe, by William Shakespeare, 1609. A surreptitious version. When the printer was rebuked for printing it "as acted at the Globe" he cancelled the phrase and substituted the words in brackets on the title, adding an extraordinary preface. The folio version was printed from this with a few variations and additions. The received text has, however, been improved by the aid of the quarto.

(15) *The Tragædy of Othello, The Moore of Venice*, 1622 (Q2 1630). Printed "after the author's death" by Thos. Walkley, who says in his *Epistle* (a book without an *Epistle* is like "A Blew Coat without a badge") that "the author's name is sufficient to vent his work." The folio text is fuller and better than that of the quarto.

There are first editions (sometimes not quite perfect) of all the above in the British Museum with the exception of *Richard II.* and *The Merry Wives*.

Quartos also appeared during Shakespeare's lifetime of *Titus Andronicus* (1594 and 1600) and *Pericles* (1609 and 1611). There were thus seventeen quartos in all.

It will be sufficiently seen from the foregoing list (which has been most kindly looked over by Mr. P. A. Daniel) that the text of the quartos is in nearly every case corrupt. There was no proper editorial supervision in their preparation, and being intended merely for the accommodation of the playgoers (and the convenience of actors who preferred to have their parts in print), very little trouble of any kind was expended upon them. Bad as they are, we should, but for them, have been the inheritors of an infinitely worse text of Shakespeare than the "tolerably good" one which we do actually possess. In many cases the quartos proved to be the best versions available for the printers, when Shakespeare's plays came to be collected; in others, they have proved of the utmost value to modern commentators in amending the text.

Had we not been steeled, through adversity, against the infirmity (to which so many critics are prone) of looking into a modern looking-glass for Shakespeare, we might be inclined to exclaim, What a remarkable thing that the dramatist during the four years of his retirement should not have prepared an edition of his own plays for the press! He might even have found time, at least, to have commenced an autobiography. We may all be allowed to share the pious regret of his fellow-actors John Heminge and Henrie Condell: "It had bene a thing, we

confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings." ¹ On the other hand it is possibly just as well that the manuscripts should not have been entrusted to him at Stratford. The greatest authors have occasionally proved incompetent revisers of their own writings, while early work that they deem "immature" is notoriously unsafe in their hands.

Some years elapsed after Shakespeare's death before anything was done to bring out a collective edition of his plays. Two things were needed for such an enterprise, money and the goodwill of the theatre proprietors, who had in their possession the manuscripts of the twenty Shakespearean plays which had not yet appeared separately in print. The requisite conjuncture of circumstances was apparently brought about in the following way. Shortly after Shakespeare died a printer called William Jaggard (who had already made money by publishing *The Passionate Pilgrim* in Shakespeare's name) absorbed a smaller printer called James Roberts, who printed the players' bills. Jaggard was thus brought into contact with the theatre proprietors, Heminge and Condell, whom he eventually convinced of the credit, not without profit, that would accrue from the publication of the popular plays of the deceased dramatist. Jaggard and his newly found allies were unwilling to incur the whole risk, so they brought into the Shakespeare publication syndicate three additional booksellers (or publishers), Aspley, Smethwick, and Edward Blount, a man of some culture and an old friend of Marlowe's. William Jaggard shared the printer's work with his son Isaac. The nominal sponsors for this memorable literary venture were the two sleeping partners, Heminge and Condell.

John Heminge is supposed to have come from Shakespeare's native town of Stratford and to have created the part of Falstaff; Henry Condell was his partner in the proprietorship of the Globe and was great as the Cardinal in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*. Shakespeare left mourning rings to them both in his will. They seem (from their advertisement to the Shakespeare volume) to have thoroughly recognised Shakespeare's utter pre-eminence. This is their great merit. They were very slow in getting to work. They probably talked freely of their great labours and their dear old friend Will Shakespeare in the Bankside taverns. Beyond this their labours were apparently confined to the selection of copies of the plays from the theatre library for the use of the printers. Some of these were apparently theatre copies which had been curtailed for representation, one or two (e.g. *The Tempest*) may have been prompt copies in the author's own hand. When printed quartos were available, they were generally used, with a few marginal corrections. In other cases transcripts of plays in private hands were used. The correction of the press was, there is little reason to doubt, left to the reader of Jaggard's printing house, who certainly could not have exercised any extraordinary vigilance in his vocation. Abbreviations were then freely used in writing, and these were very carelessly and imperfectly interpreted. The result was a rather slovenly and dilapidated text, especially in certain plays for which no quartos exist—*Coriolanus*, *All's Well*, *Macbeth*, and *Antony*. On the other hand, the exclusive folio text of *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *Julius Caesar* is exceptionally good.

With all its imperfections thick upon it, the famous first folio (F1) issued from Jaggard's press towards the close of 1623. Twenty plays were printed in it for the first time.² These were :

The Tempest.
The two Gentlemen of Verona.
Measure for Measure.
The Comedy of Errors.
As You Like It.
The Taming of the Shrew.
All is well, that Ends Well.
Twelfth-Night, or what you will.
The Winters Tale.

The Life and Death of King John.
Henry the Sixth. Parts I., II., and III.
The Life of King Henry VIII.
The Tragedy of Coriolanus.
Timon of Athens.
The Life and death of Julius Caesar.
The Tragedy of Macbeth.
Anthony and Cleopater.
Cymbeline King of Britaine.

The only play previously published as by Shakespeare and now excluded was *Pericles*. (It is just possible that a stationer with printing rights over this play prevented its inclusion.) Thirty-six pieces were thus brought together. The volume consisted of nearly 1,000 double-column pages, and copies (of which something like 200 are probably still in existence) were sold at £1. The plays are arranged in "A Catalogue" (*i.e.* contents table) under three headings—Comedies, Histories, Tragedies. Each section is separately paged. The histories are arranged in the order of the kings chronicled, the other two sections in a promiscuous manner.³ This arrangement has been followed in subsequent collective editions.

Heminge and Condell were careless editors, but they must have known quite well which plays deserved to be called (and would be accepted by the public of the time as) Shakespeare's. The first folio has therefore the greatest possible weight in determining the Shakespearean canon. It contains a few plays only in part by Shakespeare—*Henry VI.*, *Timon*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Henry VIII.*; but the mere fact that they are included points powerfully to the conclusion that the dramatist had some considerable share in the least Shakespearean of them. The fact that *Pericles*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and *Edward III.* are omitted tells no less strongly against our regarding them as Shakespearean in more than a secondary manner.

¹ In the "Epistle Dedicatorie" to the first folio.

² The licence from the Stationers' Company was obtained on November 8th, 1623. The title ran : *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies.* (Portrait "Martin Droeshout, sculptsit, London.") London : Printed by Isaac Iaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623.

³ *Troilus and Cressida* was accidentally omitted from the contents table.

The second folio edition was reprinted from the first with a few (for the most part) valueless corrections in 1632. Both Charles I. and Charles II. had copies of this edition, and the former made good use of his (though Milton pointed out that he ought to have studied *Richard III.* to better advantage). The third folio was printed in 1663-4 with the addition of seven plays: *Pericles*; *The London Prodigal*; *The History of Thomas Lord Cromwell*; *Sir John Oldcastle*, *Lord Cobham*; *The Puritan Widow*; *A Yorkshire Tragedy*; *The Tragedy of Locrine*. The attribution of these last six pieces to Shakespeare was quite erroneous. The fourth folio of 1685 reproduces the third with a slight modernisation of the spelling, and with a good many additional misprints. These blunders proved signally noxious owing to the fact that the early editors, Nicholas Rowe (1709), Alexander Pope (1725), and Sir Thomas Hanmer (1744), generally used the fourth folio as the basis of their text.¹ The modern tendency is to attach more and more credence to the readings of the first folio.

The books written about Shakespeare are legion. Of the monthly lists of Accessions printed by the British Museum Library a number rarely appears without two or three entries under the heading "Shakespeare, William." Of the yearly crop a comparatively small number are books by literary critics; for Shakespeare has become degraded in use from a subject for our quickest and best intellects down to a rubbish-tip for our worst and most inveterate faddists. A series of curious hallucinations and crazes have swept in succession over the study of Shakespeare. One, of French origin, which persisted long and obtained wide currency owing to the loud authoritative voice of Voltaire, was that Shakespeare was a kind of inspired rustic, whose habitual gibbering was diversified by great moments of genuine poetry. Another was that Shakespeare was the unrecognised and much-persecuted victim of Ben Jonson and other dramatists of the age. Allied with this was the German theory of Shakespeare's isolation among the dramatists of the period, and the exaggerated theory of Shakespeare's art, the very rudenesses and nodosities of which were nothing less than additional beauties. This was followed in the mid-nineteenth century by an extraordinary mania for the discovery of Shakespeare symbolism, together with a strong inclination to the psychological fallacy that Shakespeare's choice of tragic or comic themes must have been conditioned by the immediate circumstances of his life. Not only was each play discovered to represent some distinct ethical teaching, a parable in the disguise of a play, but almost every character of importance was discovered to conceal a satire upon some contemporary rival or enemy. In a similar spirit Shakespeare's dramatic blank verse has been subjected to every kind of possible and impossible "metrical test," while his acts and scenes have been pulled about to suit the exigencies of the latest theories of Elizabethan staging. These ingenious but for the most part faded speculations have given place to passionate altercations upon the inner meaning and significance of the sonnets—the debate concentrating upon the interpretation of the cryptic dedication addressed to the only begotten, Mr. W. H., by the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth, T. T. One can read now, with nothing short of intense amusement, the grand discovery by the French discoverer, M. Philarette Chasles, acclaimed with perfect solemnity by the *Athenæum*, the *Westminster*, and *Saturday Reviews*, and by a consensus of learned opinion, that the mystic W. H. meant nothing more nor less than "William Himself." *Voilà la symbolique des sonnets!* Another craze (initiated by people who seem to have known Shakespeare alone among great authors, and to have ignored that extraordinary faculty of assimilation which is practically indispensable to all great creative artists, constituting, in fact, the kind of literary second sight which distinguishes an author from another) is that because Shakespeare has written so well about travel, about seafaring, about soldiering, about women, about angling, about litigation, about the Bible, etc., etc., therefore he must have been a great traveller, a sailor, a soldier, a woman, an angler, a lawyer, a Protestant divine and the like, himself. This exquisite folly reached its climax in 1857, in a book by Delia Bacon to prove that Lord Bacon, and not Shakespeare, really wrote the plays commonly attributed to the latter. Shakespeare, it is plain, was not a sedentary man, or a man of study, or an inns of court man; on the contrary, he was an open-air man, a man of affairs, and a sportsman, but he had that peculiar, that compelling, and that much-abused power of transmitting thoughts and impressions by means of ink and paper which distinguishes the literary man from the non-literary man. Like all great authors, he uttered a vast quantity of truth without knowing it; he delivers *obiter dicta* in cases of which he never even heard, and pours forth profound opinions on many subjects of which practically he knew nothing.

The explanation of these crazes is not recondite; they are the direct outcome of the extravagance of Shakespeare eulogists. So inseparable from the abuse of a cult is the fungoid growth of dissent. With singular shortness of sight the votaries of the poet have represented him as (1) virtually flawless; (2) so comprehensive as to be practically universal. The converse of these propositions is probably nearer to the truth. As Vauvenargues said, "Les plus grands ouvrages de l'esprit humain sont très-assurément les moins parfaits." A faultless author would be not human but divine. As Jonson, the most epigrammatic, and Johnson, the sanest of his critics, pointed out, Shakespeare is full of faults; among these are conspicuous carelessness, profusion, and extravagance. He suffered from what Leigh Hunt calls a super-fœtation of thought, and his work at times from an ultra-luxuriance of imagination and metaphorical illustration. His partiality for the "purple patch" is inconsistent with that purity of taste which we begin to recognise as essentially Hellenic. He strains language to the point of obscurity or slovenliness, neglects rudimentary plausibility of plot or of chronological

¹ Some important emendations were suggested by Lewis Theobald in 1733. The most valuable of all (*Henry V.* II. iii. 17), "and a' babbled of green fields," was more than hinted at in a marginal note by a friend, "and a' talked of green fields." This famous emendation seems almost too brilliant to be sound.



From a Painting by Ford Madox Brown, reproduced by the courtesy of Mr. Charles Rowley.

Romeo and Juliet

coherence ("Panting Time toils after him in vain"), sacrifices dramatic propriety and instancy to bravura and rhetoric, or, worse still, to scandalous quibbles and ignominious puns. His plays were written in the first instance for the theatre of his day. He knew his audiences and actors, and made concessions to both, to the detriment of his work. Caring little for formal completeness, he rarely consented to subordinate all his detail to his main design. If an episode or a character did not fully rouse his imagination, he wrote well enough for his audience and was content.¹ Shakespeare, again, is anything but universal. His love of authority and contempt for the "mutable rank-scented many" are essentially Tudor and pre-Armada sentiments. His power, then and now, is largely a corollary of the fact that he was so perfect a representative of his age and country. Like every very great writer, Shakespeare has an energetic people behind him. While uttering supremely what he himself thinks and feels, he is at the same time uttering what is felt and thought most deeply by the best minds among his contemporaries.

Among other causes which have contributed to give Shakespeare his position of supremacy, it is possible now to specify only four: (1) His service to the common speech of Englishmen by fixing the functions of new words and enriching the vernacular with new phrases of unrivalled pith and potency; (2) the exquisite alternations of quickness and emphasis, of verisimilitude and beauty, of touch-and-go playfulness and solemn music, of comic and tragic tone which he obtains by turning from prose to verse, or *vice versa*, every such change being consciously or unconsciously modulated and motivated; (3) the consummation of dramatic blank verse in his hands between 1600 and 1612—increasing vibration and flexibility, unlimited variety of music and expression, the double-ending and varied pause so regulated as to set up a continuous flow of vital rhythm; (4) his powerful double appeal in each successive age to playgoer and student.

Among the shoals of modern Shakespeare books, upon the genesis of which we have thus endeavoured to throw a ray of light, we select those for mention which we should like every genuine Shakespeare student to possess:

Editions with Variorum Notes: "Boswell's Malone" * (24 vols. 1821); Furness's *Variorum* (12 vols.). *Sumptuous Printing*: The Stratford Town Shakespeare, 10 vols. (the 10th vol. to include new critical essays by various hands), printed at Stratford under the care of A. H. Bullen. *Apparatus Criticus*: Cambridge Edition, 1863-6, or 1893; The Arden Shakespeare; The Bankside (20 vols.). *Facsimiles*: First Folio * (Clarendon Press, 1902) and Poems (1905); Furnivall's *Shakespeare-Quarto Facsimiles* (40 vols.). *One-Volume Text*: Globe Edition (since 1891 with good Glossary); Leopold Shakespeare * (with Furnivall's introduction). *Pocket Play-per-Volume Editions*: The First Folio Edition (40 vols.); The Little Quarto Edition (40 vols.). *Sources*: Douce's *Illustrations of Shakespeare* (1807 and 1839); J. Hunter's *New Illustrations* (1845); Collier and Hazlitt's *Shakespeare Library*, 1875; Skeat's *Shakespeare's Plutarch*, 1875; Boswell-Stone's *Shakespeare's Holinshed*, 1896; Anders's *Shakespeare Books*, 1903. *Lexicons and Grammars*: A. Schmidt's *Shakespeare Lexicon* (1874); J. Bartlett's *Concordance*, 1895; E. A. Abbott's *Shakespearean Grammar*; Franz's *Shakespeare Grammatik*; Fleay and Dowden's *Handbooks*. *Lives*: J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps's *Outlines* (10th ed. 1898); Sidney Lee's *Life* * (5th ed. 1905), with which should be used as supplementary D. H. Madden's *Diary of Master William Silence*, 1897; C. I. Elton's *Will. Shakespeare, His Family and Friends*, 1904; and J. W. Gray's *Shakespeare's Marriage*, 1905. *Shakespeare Reference*: *Shakespeare's Centurie of Praise*, 1874; *Fresh Allusions to Shakespeare*, 1886 (New Shakespeare Soc. Publications), and *The Praise of Shakespeare* (ed. Hughes), 1904. *Critics*: Eighteenth century—Johnson's *Preface*, 1765; R. Farmer's *Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare*, 1767; Nathan Drake's *Shakespeare and His Times*, 1817 (see N. Smith's *Eighteenth-Century Essays on Shakespeare*). Romantic—Coleridge's *Notes and Lectures* (ed. 1883); Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*; Schlegel's *Shakespeare and the Drama*, 1815; Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and Heine's *Frauen-Gestalten*. Modern—Dowden's *Shakespeare, His Mind and Art*, 1875; Brandes's *William Shakespeare*, 1898; A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), and Essays by Landor (the *Citation of William Shakespeare* for deer-stealing, and *Imaginary Conversations*, *passim*), Swinburne, Lowell, Wyndham, Moulton, and A. W. Ward. Foreign—Kreyssig, Brandl, Mezières, Stapfer, Beljame, and Jusserand.

¹ See Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*, iv. 8; Seccombe and Allen, *Age of Shakespeare*, 1904, ii. 128-31; Bookman, October, 1903. The present chapter has been most kindly read by, among others, Mr. A. H. Bullen, Mr. Walter Sichel, Dr. J. W. Allen, and Dr. Furnivall. Both Mr. Bullen and Dr. Furnivall dissent from the views expressed in regard to the sonnets at the foot of p. 99; Dr. Allen dissents from the view that *Macbeth* is the least actable of the tragedies; Dr. Furnivall disagrees with the view taken of Shakespeare's marriage and with the preference given to *Richard II.* over *King John*.

CHAPTER IX

THE LATER CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS OF SHAKESPEARE

"Of the later dramatists, I think Beaumont and Fletcher rank next to Shakespeare in the amount of pleasure they give, though not in the quality of it, and in fanciful charm of expression. In spite of all their coarseness, there is a delicacy, a sensibility, an air of romance, and above all, a grace in their best work that make them for ever attractive to the young, and to all those who have learned to grow old amiably."

—J. R. LOWELL, *Old English Dramatists*.

Beaumont and Fletcher—Ben Jonson—*Volpone*—*The Alchemist*—Jonson's later comedies—Chapman—Marston—Dekker—Middleton—Heywood—Webster—Tourneur—Ford—Massinger—Shirley.

AS to the gulf which separates Shakespeare from his fellow Elizabethans the opinion of Alexander Dyce, perhaps the most thorough-going student of the old English drama that we can boast, is well worth hearing. "Lamb and Hazlitt," he says, "have on the whole exaggerated the general merits of the dramatists of Elizabeth and James's days. 'Shakespeare,' says Hazlitt, 'towered above his fellows in shape and gesture proudly eminent, but he was one of a race of giants, the tallest, the strongest, the most graceful and beautiful of them; but it was a common and a noble brood.' A falsè remark, I conceive, has seldom been made by critic. Shakespeare is not only immeasurably superior to the dramatists of his time in creative power, in insight into the human heart, and in profound thought; but he is moreover utterly unlike them in almost every respect. . . ."

The plays which approach most nearly at any one given point to the current of Shakespearean drama are probably those of Beaumont and Fletcher. But this label of "Beaumont and Fletcher" amounts very often to hardly more than a chronological expression signifying that the plays were written between the accession of James I. and the meeting of the Long Parliament by well-accredited collaborating playwrights of the period. The Beaumont and Fletcher folios of 1647 and 1679 were a kind of large repertory of post-Shakespearean drama, generally romantic in type, but extremely

various in point of merit. Beaumont's share in these plays was comparatively small; but both Fletcher and Massinger had a large share in the contents, sometimes writing alone, but more often in collaboration with Middleton, Rowley, and others. Fletcher was an extraordinarily versatile writer, a veritable Proteus of the drama of that day. This renders it extremely difficult to fix his work by internal evidence. The distribution of plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher *corpus* must therefore always remain extremely tentative; and we must be continually on our guard against the eagerness of the specialist to reach definite conclusions in the matter. Roughly speaking, however, there can be no doubt that John Fletcher, who, with the exception of Heywood, was probably the most prolific dramatist of the day, was the protagonist of the plays.

John Fletcher, youngest son of Richard Fletcher, who acted the ungrateful part of chaplain to Mary Stuart in the last days of her life, and eventually became Bishop of London, was born at Rye, in Sussex, in 1579. He was educated at Benet (Corpus) College, Cambridge, and had certainly commenced his literary career in London by the year 1607. It is probable that he began writing for the stage a few years earlier than that. *The Woman's Prize*, a kind of sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Wit at Several Weapons*, both very early plays (1604-6), show

the influence of the Lord Chamberlain's company and its great dramatist upon this young recruit to the ranks of the playwriting and theatrical wits.

He seems to have become acquainted with Francis Beaumont not later than 1607, and their first successful play, *The Romance of Philaster*, was probably written between 1608 and 1610. The fluency and versatility of his endowment must have attracted the attention of Shakespeare about the same time; and during 1613 we find Shakespeare contributing scenes and passages to the two predominantly Fletcherian plays of *Henry VIII.* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. In general popularity, facility in writing, and honest love of popular applause, and also in apparent indifference to the final form of his productions, Fletcher seems to have approached the great dramatist more nearly than any other writer of the age. Subsequently he became a close ally of Massinger. He died at the zenith of his fame, a victim of the plague, in August, 1625, and was buried near Massinger in St. Saviour's, Southwark.

Francis Beaumont, the descendant of a good Leicestershire family, famous for its lawyers, was born within the borders of Charnwood Forest at Grace-Dieu in 1584, and was educated at Broadgates Hall, Oxford, whence he migrated to the Inner Temple in 1600. A literary friendship with Ben Jonson, and an intimacy with Fletcher, formed probably much about the same time, brought him into connection with the stage a few years after his settlement in London. In 1605 he inherited part of the property of his elder brother, the poet, Sir John Beaumont; but he seems to have clung to the Bohemian habits of a writer for the stage until at least 1613, when he married a lady of birth and fortune. Three years later he died (March, 1616), and was buried in Westminster Abbey near Chaucer and Spenser. According to the tradition handed down by Aubrey, the two poets, the Orestes and Pylades of our drama, inhabited the same dwelling on the Bankside, not far from the playhouse, and

had everything, including a single cloak, in common.

Of the plays ordinarily attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher, it does not appear probable that more than about twelve were the joint composition of both dramatists. About fifteen others are fairly well ascertained to be by Fletcher alone. The remainder are for the most part by Fletcher and Massinger, with a few minor variations. This first delimitation is based primarily upon the hard facts of chronology. Plays known to have been written after 1616 could manifestly not have been the work of Beaumont. Beaumont's share in the plays previous to this date is decided with a strong colour of plausibility upon internal evidence, which is almost exclusively metrical in character. There is something very distinctive about Fletcher's verse, thoroughly typical of an age which has begun to think itself sophisticated, and to talk of the "last reign," less than ten years since, as *vieux jeu*. Fletcher had to sustain a reputation of being thoroughly modern; one sign of this was to be found in the looseness and carelessness of his line structure. His line runs commonly to eleven, and not infrequently to twelve, thirteen, or even fourteen syllables, and there is little attempt, as in Shakespeare, to redress redundancies of effect by the general balance of a passage. Slipshod methods seem natural to Fletcher. He is exceedingly fond of writing "'em" for "them," and "'tis" for "it is"; his redundant syllables are frequently accented, and he has an exasperating trick of adding a perfectly superfluous monosyllable, such as "sir," to make up his eleven syllables. There is a marked lack of dignity about the cadence of his verse.¹ We feel instinctively that it was a court coterie and not a strong mixed audience that encouraged such mannerisms. Fletcher, however, was a most versatile artist, and whether in collaboration with Beaumont, by himself, with Massinger, or in some other combination, he was for all tastes, and generally had wit at call. Of all the great battalion of Elizabethan dramatists, he is perhaps the only one (with such very

¹ Such a passage as the following is not at all exceptional :

"Go home, good man, and tell your masters from us,
We do 'em too much honour to force from 'em
Their barren countries, ruin their waste cities;
And tell 'em, out of love, we mean to leave 'em,

Since they will need be kings, no more to tread on
Than they have able wits, and powers to manage;
And so we shall befriend 'em.—Ha! what does she
here?"

—Humorous Lieutenant, l. 1.

minor exceptions as Day and Field) who reveals a decided genius for frivolity. This quality is seen unmistakably, as we should expect, only in those plays which Fletcher wrote alone. Those written with Beaumont are stained strongly with sentimentality, and elevated by a nobler diction than was habitual to Fletcher alone.

These distinctions will appear in the attempt which we must now make to group and characterise some fifteen of the most notable out of the fifty odd dramas ordinarily attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher. The earliest of these in point of date (with one exception) are also the most serious and the most emotional in quality; and these are undoubtedly those in which the serio-comic vein of Fletcher was weighted on the serious side of the morally stronger man. The chief of these properly called Beaumont and Fletcher plays were *Philaster*, produced about 1608 (printed 1620), *The Maid's Tragedy* about 1610 (printed 1619), and *A King and No King* in 1611. The predominant part in all these is felt to be that of Beaumont. The aim of the dramatists in *Philaster* seems to have been to work a romantic and quasi-tragic vein into comedy of the *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It* order. Extravagant though the plot is, the beauty of the descriptions, the poetry of the sentiment, and the sweetness of the verse combine with the novelty of the compound to make the play a very brilliant success, and rendered the two heroines, Euphrasia and Arethusa, conspicuous on the stage for over two centuries. *The Maid's Tragedy* is planned on a scheme equally ambitious with that of *Philaster*. The plot, again, is as inherently improbable as it is unpleasant, and the fluctuations of feeling in Aspatia are very confusedly traced; but the phrasing and diction in this play are finer and more direct than that of anything else by Beaumont and Fletcher. And long delayed

though the awakening of Evadne to her shame is, her resoluteness in finally wreaking vengeance is very nobly depicted. The third of these plays, *A King and No King*, is again mainly the work of Beaumont, though the hand of Fletcher is seen in the last two acts, and also in the plot. The subject of this drama is a revolting one, and the chief character, Arbaces, whose monstrous passion is ostensibly the theme of the play, is very crudely worked out. The play survived long, however, on the strength of the admirable portraiture of another Parolles, the cowardly Captain Bessus, with his sword-bearing tutors in the gentle art of evading challenges.

The two plays of importance left to Beaumont and Fletcher are both in a much lighter vein. They are *The Scornful Lady* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*; the former an early production of a rather coarse and dull texture which owes most of its merit to the *Adelphi* of Terence. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* may probably be attributed to 1611. It is a highly original and very amusing mock-heroic drama, burlesquing the theatrical tastes of the city apprentices and the theatrical manners of the Whitehall courtiers with a delightful impartiality. The comic vein is wonderfully well sustained, and the whole piece maintained at one temperature in a manner that is very rare in the Jacobean drama. The levity of Fletcher in combination with the humours of Beaumont afford promise of new conquests in the domain of the drama—frustrated, unhappily, by Beaumont's premature retirement in 1613, and death three years later.

Fletcher's unaided skill is seen in his farcical or semi-farcical comedies or romances, in which his technical adroitness, his extraordinary gift for *blague*, his pretty talent for lyric and idyll, and his irresponsible fancy are seen to full advantage.¹ Joyously funny and cheery again

¹ Such were *Monsieur Thomas*, an early play, in which a travelled scapegrace is amusingly characterised; *The Chances* (? 1619), another very popular comedy, with a Cervantes plot of the complicated order then in vogue; *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1619), which sounds like a novel of Marryat's, but relates to the strange case of a lieutenant who fights like Mars when in pain with disease, but is a coward when well. The underplot is whimsical, licentious, and extremely laughable, the racy dialogue often convulsing the reader. *The Pilgrim* (1621), containing a scenario of operatic complexity dominated by the most sparkling of Fletcher's soubrettes, Julietta; *The Beggar's Bush* (1622), an eccentric medley of Cervantic complexity, with Jews and gipsies, farce, parody, and what-not, so charming and "sunshiny" withal that Coleridge declared he could read it all day; and *Rule a Wife and have a Wife* (1624), a clever and amusing comedy of a despised husband who asserts himself (as *Still Waters Run Deep* and *The Walls of Jericho* attest that husbands may still do). Fletcher's two unaided tragedies, *Bonduca* and *Valentinian*, are stagey, declamatory, and unreal, suggesting the talent of a Fragonard exerting itself to produce a St. Sebastian in the style of Guido. Of his work in collaboration with Massinger, the one tragedy of note, *Thierry and Theodoret*, gains enormously in dignity by the association. *The Little*

is *Wit without Money*. The popularity of this kind is shown in the Rev. W. Cartwright's preference of Fletcher's banter to Shakespeare's wit in the well-known lines :

Shakespeare to thee was dull : whose best jest lies
I' th' ladies' questions and the fool's replies ;
Nature was all his art ; thy vein was free
As his, but without his scurrility.

Ben Jonson was born in the early part of 1573. His grandfather was a small laird of Annandale, in Scotland, from which place he removed to Carlisle, and was subsequently taken into the service of Henry VIII. His father forfeited his estate under Queen Mary, subsequently became a Protestant minister, and died in 1573. The poet was born in the city of Westminster about a month after his father's death. In 1575 his mother married again a master bricklayer. He was sent to a school at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, and showed such remarkable aptitude that he was sent by a friend of the family to Westminster, where William Camden was then second master. His wonderful memory enabled him rapidly to climb into the sixth form. About 1589 he obtained an exhibition, and passed a few months at St. John's College, Cambridge. But his father soon required him in the business, in which he laboured until he found the work too irksome, when he escaped from it, not by returning to Cambridge, but by joining the English army in Flanders as a volunteer. He returned from abroad before he was twenty, found his stepfather dead, took to the London stage for a living, and was entrusted ere long, just as Shakespeare had been, with the altering and repairing of pieces for the stage. Aubrey, with the amazing credulity which characterised his mind, stated that about this time Jonson killed Marlowe, the poet, on Bunhill. The story had this amount of foundation, that on September 22nd, 1598, Jonson fought what he later described as a duel with an actor called Gabriel Spencer, whom he killed. Arrested on a charge of felony, he pleaded guilty ; escaped the gallows by benefit of clergy, but underwent a brief imprisonment, in the course of which he adopted the Catholic faith on trust from a "sharking" priest, but abjured it on conviction twelve years

later. The incident led to a breach with Henslowe, who was angered by the loss of a promising member of his company. It thus came about that Jonson offered his first extant comedy, *Every Man in his Humor*, not to Henslowe, but to the rival company of Lord Chamberlain's servants. Shakespeare, fresh from the success of *Henry IV.*, may have had something to say in regard to the acceptance of the piece. He certainly took part in the performance, and probably played the part of Knowell when it was given at the Globe in 1598. Jonson, whose work had hitherto been that of an obscure collaborator, henceforth ranked as one of the foremost dramatists of the day. His next two comedies, which, like the first, are very Plautian in character, and turn upon a complicated intrigue into which the satire is introduced more or less as an accident, were next produced, and were well received. But Jonson already set himself up as a censor of literary taste and of the manners of his age. Already he boasted loudly of his superiority to vulgar criticism and of the fearless hand with which he probed the foibles of his age. An envious howl, of which but the faintest echo still survives, was almost certainly raised upon the first stage triumphs of the youthful Shakespeare. A more formidable cabal was now formed against the pretensions of Ben Jonson. In the stage squabble which followed, and which has been dignified by the sonorous name of "Poetomachia," antagonism to Jonson's arrogance was complicated by the rivalries of theatrical companies and by cross personal feuds to such an extent that it is extremely difficult to get any clear idea of the *mêlée*.

From 1599 to 1602 Jonson was partly occupied in hack work for Henslowe, and partly on the three satirical and literary dramas, *Every Man out of his Humor*, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *Poetaster*. Of these, *Cynthia's Revels*, entirely lacking in substance though it is, is a simply marvellous exercise of literary adroitness and dexterity. In it, too, he seems to approach more nearly than anywhere else to the light touch and the lyrical *abandon*. ("Queen and huntress, chaste and fair" is to our mind his most beautiful song), the absence of which is, generally speaking, so conspicuous

French Lawyer, *The Spanish Curate*, and *The Custom of the Country*, all given between 1618 and 1622, are probably assignable in the main to the exquisite serio-comic vein of Fletcher. In the last-mentioned his verve in working out a whimsical conception triumphs over every obstacle, though the play resulting was so scandalous in its licence that it shocked the sense of propriety of the not too sensitive Mr. Pepys.

in his works—"works" too often in the sense that he could not conceal the labour he expended upon them. In 1603 was produced Jonson's earliest extant tragedy, *Sejanus*. A little later he got into trouble for abusing the "industrious Scots" in the delightful city comedy of *Eastward Ho* (in which Chapman and Marston bore a share), but from 1605 down to 1615 he entered upon the most fruitful and the most glorious period of his career. In 1605, the year of *Volpone*, he produced the first of his wonderful masques. A hybrid between a dramatic poem and a pageant, the masque grew out of the carnival and Epiphany revels, and was naturalised at the court of Henry VIII. as a Twelfth Night frolic, with disguising song and dance; classical and mythological decorations, inventions and machinery were subsequently added. The diversion of masquing was generally deputed by Elizabeth and her nobles to the children of the chapel. Jonson was commissioned to organise a number of these spectacular shows for James I.'s extravagant and pleasure-loving Queen, Anne, aided by such experts as Inigo Jones, Ferrabosco (music), and T. Giles (concerted dances). They cost thousands of pounds, and were acted frequently by the Queen and her ladies—the Masque of Blackness, for instance, in which they appeared as negroes. Jonson's part of them was lavishly done—abounding in splendid diction, fertile in imaginative device, and rich in masculine word play. His only rival in masque-making was Thomas Campion. Ben was also famous for his songs. These are generally somewhat artificial—we can fancy him planning them in accordance with some formula or recipe such as the author of *Annabel Lee* professed:

Then Jonson came instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule.

But, however produced, his effects are not seldom superb. The Elizabethan music was in his ears, its phrases were on his lips, and these things remained a legacy of English lyrists down to Marvell's time.

Meanwhile Jonson's best plays followed in rapid succession: *The Silent Woman*, 1609; *The Alchemist*, 1610; *Catiline*, 1611; *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614; and *The Devil is an Ass*, 1616. He remained high in court favour with hardly a break. In 1616, when he brought out a folio edition of his *Works*, he was made poet laureate with a pension of 100 marks. In

the previous years we note traits of the man in the casual glimpses we get of him. Rejoining the Anglican Church with such energy that he drained the communion cup to the dregs; dominating the circle of wits at the Mermaid in Bread Street, or sharing the nimble talk with Shakespeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, and Drayton; swallowing large potations of Canary; and seeking diversion in the neighbouring purlieus of Bartholomew Fair or the rookeries of Alsatia and Bermuda. For a time we hear he served as tutor to Raleigh's son and went with him to Paris, where he told the Cardinal du Perron frankly that his translation of Virgil was worthless; but his loose habits of drinking lost him this post, shamefully enough. The Earl of Pembroke, one of his many high-born friends, sent him regularly on New Year's Day £20 to buy books withal; but a fire broke out and seriously damaged his library, whereupon he wrote his *Execration of Vulcan*. In 1618 he set out on his famous walking tour to Scotland, spending nearly a year *en route*, including a sojourn of some weeks with William Drummond at Hawthornden. He offended the quiet scholar half-unwittingly by his brutal outspokenness, his strongly assertive and contemptuous manner. He was, however, honoured in strange lands by being made a burghess of Edinburgh, and he seems to have felt sufficiently at home to fall in love with a lady, to whom he left his picture as a vehicle of consolation. He was also created an M.A. at Oxford with every kind of complimentary observance. His last really notable play appeared in 1625, and with the death of James and accession of Charles his favour began to decline. He had a fierce feud with Inigo Jones, the topics of dissension being those still common among artistes. He came under the shadow of royal displeasure, and in place of masques contrived hasty plays, which Dryden not altogether unjustly calls "dotages." He wrote an appeal to himself at last to "leave the loathed stage." Touched by compassion for the old poet, Charles sent him a present and afterwards raised his (generally unpaid) salary as laureate. So we get a last glimpse of Ben in some renewal of his old glory, with his tribe of satellite wits around him in the Apollo (or big room) of the Devil Tavern in Fleet Street. We can see him still with his rocky face, hectoring voice, great stoop, and "mountain belly," living (until at the last he was bedridden with palsy) the bibulous life of a reveller

and a roysterer, as well as a stupendous wit. He died on the 6th and was buried on the 9th of August, 1637, in Westminster Abbey,¹ where Sir John (Jack) Young, for eighteenpence to a mason, procured him that most famous of English epitaphs, "O rare Ben Jonson."

For all his didactic tone, the moralist is not unduly obtruded in Jonson. His censorship is, indeed, more judicial than strictly moral, and his scorn of fools and shams is quite as great, if not greater, than his hatred for knaves. As a chastiser of vice, he is seen to best advantage in *Volpone* or *The Fox*, first performed at the Globe Theatre in 1605, and published two years later with a dedication to the two equal and sister universities. In this play certainly Jonson lashes vice with terrific power, and metes out to the moral delinquents at the end a stern and exemplary justice by way of punishment.

"Putting aside Shakespeare," says Cumberland, "I would venture an opinion that this drama of *The Fox* is, critically speaking, the nearest to perfection of any one drama, comic or tragic, on the English stage." From this judgment there seems little reason, even at the present day, to dissent. The power and variety of the working of the central theme, the admirable form both of the structure and of the embellishments, combine with the absorbing nature of the fable and the marvellous richness and energy of the dialogue to render the play one of the most fascinating to read, as it has always proved until quite recent times one of the most effective on the stage. The only plays that approach *Volpone* in maintaining the strenuous ethical tone are the tragedy of *Sejanus* and to a lesser extent the comedy *The Devil is an Ass*. Either they represent a series of ingenious trickeries as in *The Alchemist* and *Every Man in his Humor*,

without anything that could be called a serious moral, or, as in *Bartholomew Fair*,² they illustrate a kind of saturnalia, affording opportunities for a wonderful satiric insight into the "upside down" of society. In *The Silent Woman* we have what is really a pure farce, depending much upon ingenuity of plot, without a trace of moral tone, and all the better for its freedom from it.

The Alchemist (that "incomparable" play, as Mr. Pepys called it), in which we have the very apotheosis of roguery, is chiefly famous for its highly finished construction. Jonson often tended to a complexity by which the central emphasis essential for the serious motive was sacrificed; but in *The Alchemist* he attains the happy mean. The comedy ends in no very moral fashion. The author inclines his audience, like Lovewit, to take an indulgent view of the transcendent wit, roguish though it is, of the inimitable Face. Face is, indeed, the hero of the piece, and his adroitness and his marvellous "patter" to his victims surpass even the cleverness of Mosca. In ingenuity of construction *The Alchemist* excels *Volpone*, but in the deeper fertility of imaginative power and poetry it seems to us a good deal inferior. Less grim than *The Alchemist*, and much less grim than *Volpone*, is *The Silent Woman*, which is the most Molièresque and, on the whole, the most laughable of all Jonson's pieces. The collegiate ladies are, in reality, a kind of anticipation of the *précieuses* of Molière. The idea of the character of Morose, a gentleman who loves not noise, and who insists upon being answered by signs, is taken direct from Libanius, the sophist of Antioch. His pre-occupation with the idea of getting a tongue-tied wife, and his ludicrous deception, is quite in the manner of one of the

¹ When John Hunter's grave was being made in the Abbey, Jonson's skull was discovered with red hair still attaching to it, and the position confirmed the tradition that he had been buried upright (Stanley, *Memorials of the Abbey*, 1882, 255).

² The plot of *Bartholomew Fair* bears the same relation to that of a complex structure like *The Alchemist* as that of *Pickwick* bears to the plot of a highly organised modern novel. The fable is, in fact, little more than a device for bringing the various characters together in the middle of *Bartholomew Fair*. Jonson combines throughout this wonderful medley the frankness of ancient with the richness of modern humour, his satire running riot through a laughable saturnalia of knavery, folly, and cant. In the humorous yet keen observation of its outlook upon society it connects unmistakably with the drama of Shadwell and the fiction of Defoe, Smollett, and Dickens. Here, as in *The Silent Woman*, the conception is farcical; and the most serious part of the satire, that which deals with Puritanism, is no more than caricature. In *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Staple of News* (1626), Jonson's wit and wisdom are still in possession. Nevertheless, signs of the decline which set in at the close of James I.'s reign are already visible: in *The Devil is an Ass* we observe an inability to combine the various threads of a complex intrigue, as is done with such marvellous skill in *The Alchemist*. In *The Staple of News* the reader is never certain whether he is to regard the character of Pecunia as a money-bag or as a real live princess; and the same deplorable confusion of allegory and realism runs through the whole structure of this remarkable but very imperfect play.

farces of Molière. The *lusis*, or untying of the plot, seems hardly to deserve all the commendation bestowed upon it by Dryden. But the introduction of a counter-butt to Morose in the person of Sir Amorous Lafoole, descended lineally from the French Lafooles, but *not* one of the Lafooles of Essex, is an admirable bit of comic invention.

Jonson conceived comedy as a picture of manners, and he showed, perhaps, an overfondness for local colour and contemporary types. Of this kind there existed no complete example in England before his time. Shakespeare approached it in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and again in *Twelfth Night*; but both of these appeared after *Every Man in his Humor*, which was in 1598 essentially a new thing in native comedy. Shakespeare's comedy is never quite what Jonson's was, preeminently satiric and didactic. To Jonson the end and aim in comedy was the ridicule of folly and every form of pretension, affectation, and cant; the exhibition of the comic hideousness of lust, avarice, and dishonesty. Intolerant of every kind of folly and humbug, his comedy is the whip wherewith he scourged what he hated and despised. Herein lay both the intensity and the narrowness inherent in his scheme of comic drama. He exhibits follies and vices pitilessly, minutely, aspect after aspect, and bids us not so much laugh as scorn and loathe. Indeed, it is almost too serious for laughter. We can laugh somewhat at Bobadill and Kately, for in *Every Man in his Humor* there is a certain geniality of manner. But this disappears in the later comedy; the scourging is too terrific, and the exposure too brutal for laughter. Who can laugh at Corvino? Even the roaring humours of *Bartholomew Fair* are grim in the memory. Throughout his comedies Jonson stands apart, an unsympathetic showman, an Asper, contemptuous and wrathful. His ridicule trembles always on the verge of denunciation. We cannot laugh heartily at what we despise, and Jonson himself is not amused, or only grimly. *Volpone* is a tragedy rather than a comedy, and *Bartholomew Fair* a farce that Juvenal might have written.

But, after all, we have no right to demand laughter of Jonson, still less a creative power given to Shakespeare alone among dramatists. It must be remembered that Jonson the satirist, the censor, did not require for his purposes the

creation of complex human beings. Where the object is the satire of real types, complete human figures demanding sympathy, and untypical in proportion to their individuality, are out of place. And by comparison with those of any other Elizabethan dramatist than Shakespeare, how rich and vivid to us are Jonson's portraits!

Jonson is by far the most intellectual of Elizabethan dramatists, save Shakespeare, and by right of his masculine wit and energy he occupies to this day, by acclamation, the Vice-President's chair. Every scene of his great comedies has a concentrated force, a drastic wit, an irony, a sublime common sense, a grip of detail, a vivid intensity, hardly to be paralleled. The conception and construction of *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair* are alike triumphs of imagination and grasp. In exactness of observation where humanity alone is concerned, Jonson matches Shakespeare, and in constructive power he stands first of all. At his highest points, in *Volpone* and in Sir Epicure Mammon, his imagination has created transcendent and unique figures, in which the comic and the horrible meet and are one.

Great writer and great Elizabethan though he is, Jonson remains something of an alien in English letters. From the mind of his great contemporary he stands as much aloof as an Arab stands from a Persian. He makes one capital mistake—that of thinking that English Art would best achieve its aim by assimilating or appropriating what was best in the Greco-Latin literature. He forgot that whenever a foreign work is finely translated an opportunity (probably unique, so rare is the planetary conjunction required for the production of really fine work) is missed of producing an original creative effort of a high order.

The learned George Chapman (1559—1634), *doyen* of Elizabethan dramatists, gave his most noted plays to the world simultaneously with the great dramas of Shakespeare's prime, between 1600 and 1613. He had a considerable share in the comedy *Eastward Ho*, containing those reflections on the Scots which gave him and his collaborator Ben Jonson so much trouble. This was in 1605, and in the same year appeared his best comedy, *All Fools*, which owes, however, its unusual excellence of construction entirely to Terence. But Chapman's best work is in those tragedies which he founded on incidents in contem-

porary French history. The Duc de Biron, whose name had already been taken in vain by Shakespeare in *Love's Labour's Lost*, perished on the scaffold in 1602. Chapman's two plays of *The Conspiracy* and *Tragedy of Byron*, forming one continuous drama in ten acts, were written probably as early as 1605, though they were not published until 1608. Two other plays of a similar type, *Bussy d'Ambois* and *The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois*, belonging respectively to 1607 and 1613, are replete with midnight conspiracy, mystery, murder, and Machiavellism. In some of the splendid rhetoric which is inlaid in his speeches, Chapman, perhaps, more easily approaches Shakespeare than any of his fellow dramatists. But as regards dramatic effect, he is seldom reminiscent of Shakespeare even in his least inspired moments, for instance, in *Timon of Athens*. Chapman seems to have no idea whatever of the need for rapidity of action on the stage; he is tediously long-winded, his puppets do not talk, they make speeches. Yet, now and again, amidst verbosity, over-emphasis, and emphatic commonplace, there comes a speech so magnificently inspired that we cannot help regarding Chapman as one of the greatest poets of the Elizabethan drama. Take the following passage, for example:

Give me a spirit that on this life's rough sea
Loves to have his sails filled with a lusty wind
Even till his sail-yards tremble, his masts crack,
And his rapt ship run on her side so low
That she drinks water and her keel ploughs air.

A colleague of both Jonson and Chapman in *Eastward Ho* was John Marston (1576—1634), who was educated at Coventry and Brasenose, Oxford, took orders, and in 1616 became vicar of Christchurch, Hampshire. He resigned his living in 1631 and died on June 25th three years later, in the parish of Aldermanbury. Personally, Marston seems to have been at feud with most of his fellow dramatists, conspicuously with Ben Jonson, in whose *Poetaster* and *Revels* he appears respectively as the contemptible Crispinus and the pretentious cad Hedon; his satires called *The Scourge of Villainy*, 1598, bespeak a lofty disdain for the whole human race. There is great turgidity and violence about his tragedies, despite their occasional trenchancy of expression. But he is for ever straining his style a point too high.

There is something suspect about the harshness and bitterness of Marston which becomes monotonous, and assumes the outlines of a pose. His two comedies, *The Malcontent* and *The Dutch Courtezan*, 1604-5, are on the whole decidedly better reading than his tragedies, such as *Antonio and Mellida* (1602) and *Sophonisba* (1606). The extravagance of Marston's tragicomic rant was not improbably glanced at in Shakespeare's ancient Pistol. His work remains a glaring example of the extravagance, misuse of genuine power, and lack of taste, which mars so much of the Elizabethan drama.

Of Thomas Dekker we know little, save that he oscillated pretty steadily between Grub Street, the Counter and King's Bench prisons, and worked diligently for most of his life, both in partnership and alone, as playwright and pamphleteer. Dekker possessed an unrivalled knowledge of the town, and he was, with Heywood, the chief of those popular city dramatists who depended more upon the groundlings and apprentices for applause than upon the mixed West End audience, with a strong sprinkling of nobility, to which Shakespeare more especially addresses himself. This group of dramatists, which Ben Jonson held in special disdain,¹ was reinforced from time to time by such men as Rowley, Anthony Munday, Day, Marston, and Middleton. All these writers wrote much in collaboration, and were easily diverted from the drama to produce pageants, panegyrics, and any other form of literature that would pay. Dekker displays in his prose works great talents of observation and descriptive narration; and in his plays, writes Professor Saintsbury, "a most charming dramatic genius, a little, as is the wont of the time, chaotic and irregular, but sweet and pathetic, as is no contemporary save the master of all, especially in the delineation of women's character, while he has both blank verse and lyric touches and flashes, not seldom well sustained, of divinest poetry." This reads like an attempt to see Dekker with the eyes of Lamb, who said that there was poetry enough in Dekker for anything. And there certainly are rich veins of poetry in Dekker, especially of the lyrical order; but, as a whole, his plays have much of the old primitive chaos about them. They take us back to the undeveloped drama of the early 'nineties rather than to the brilliant comedy of *Twelfth Night* and *Every Man in*

¹ Dekker was the Demetrius Fannius, the rank slanderer and mere "play-dresser" in *Poetaster*.

his *Humor*. They revert in type to medleys such as *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* or *The Old Wives' Tale*, if they do not, indeed, go still further back half-way to the moralities of John Heywood. Something in the nature of a dramatic parable was deemed specially appropriate to the London apprentices from the earliest times down to *George Barnwell*, and from *George Barnwell* down to the latest Drury Lane melodrama. This parabolic quality is seen very clearly in Dekker's most popular dramas, such as *Old Fortunatus*, given at Christmas, 1599, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* of the same date, and *The Honest Whore*, in two parts, of a few years later.¹ Dekker seems to write most happily and easily when he is in a hurry, and has not to cast about for his material; his good-humoured realism is then seen at its best, whereas, when he tries to be impressive, he is nearly always conventional. He deserves some credit as one of the very few Elizabethan playwrights who cared to base their drama on the actual life they saw about them.

Another writer who comes into this group as a utility dramatist, following such men as Munday, Chettle, Haughton, and Dekker, from whom he derived several characteristics, was Thomas Middleton, a gentleman of Gray's Inn, who turned scribbler, tried his hands in most kinds of writing for the market, obtained a small post in the city as chronologer in 1620, and died in 1627. His most fertile period of composition was between 1607 and 1611, when he wrote *The Phoenix*, *Michaelmas Term*, *The Mayor of Quinborough*, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *The Family of Love*, *Your Five Gallants*, *A Mad World, my Masters*, and *The Roaring Girl*, this last in collaboration with Dekker. All these were designed to hold the mirror up to contemporary fashions and foibles; hence his plays form an invaluable treasure-house for the antiquary.² "Possessing a knowledge of life in London only rivalled by that of Dekker, he knew how to reproduce his own experience in

a dramatic form. Bawds, panders, harlots, usurers, pawnbrokers, gulls, gallants, gamblers, doctors, judges, linen-drappers, and apprentices crowd and bustle through the dialogue of his comedies with a vigorous zest which must have been highly palatable to the spectators of the time, and perhaps no English dramatist has inherited so much of the prosaic imitative spirit of the new comedy at Athens." Middleton often worked in conjunction with a professional actor-dramatist, William Rowley; Rowley influenced him in the direction of a gentler type of character-drawing in addition to writing the first scene and underplot of *A Fair Quarrel*, the first part of *A World Tost at Tennis*, and the first and last scenes as well as the underplot of *The Changeling*, by far Middleton's finest play. *The Changeling*, written about 1622, proves decisively to modern critics that Middleton's real strength lay in tragedy; but he has left only one other powerful essay in this line, the undated tragedy of *Women Beware Women*. The central situation in *The Changeling* is magnificently conceived. De Flores, a deformed scoundrel of deepest dye, has a passion for Beatrice (the heroine), who loathes him. Beatrice has been plighted to Alonzo, a noble gentleman; unhappily her heart had already been bestowed on one Alsemero. De Flores tempts Beatrice by offering to put Alonzo out of the way. She consents. De Flores, hitherto grovelling in humility, intrudes into her chamber on the day of the wedding between Beatrice and Alsemero, and insists on the satiation of his hellish passion, to the gratification of which he compels her by threats of divulging all. Here occurs a truly great scene—one of the finest in English drama. Alsemero nevertheless suspects, and De Flores only prevents punishment by himself applying the cold steel—first to Beatrice, then to himself.

Thomas Heywood, gentleman, born in Lincolnshire somewhere about 1574, and educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, was one of the most

¹ *Old Fortunatus*, for instance, derived from an old German source, is a regular fable, illustrating the misuse of riches and the blindness of man when he is *vis-à-vis* with his destiny. There is a good comic servant in this called Shadow, but hardly any other characterisation to speak of. There is a good deal, however, in the second part of *The Honest Whore*, where we have another morality presented, this time rather as a romance than an extravaganza. In the first part of this play, Bellafront, the heroine, is converted from her evil life by the eloquent pleadings of Hippolito; the second, and much the better, part represents the converted courtesan defending the position she has gained against the assaults of Hippolito himself. It is Hippolito now who has fallen away from his former lofty standard of virtue. Grossly improbable as the plot is, the characters are powerfully realised, and some of the scenes deeply moving owing to the simplicity and directness of the pathos.

² His able *Game at Chess*, with dangerous political satire in it, was given in 1624 to crowded audiences; it shows what a fine classical scholar Middleton was—"hardly second to Ben himself."

prolific playwrights of James I.'s reign. He wrote a prose *Apology for the Stage* in 1612, defending the theatre from the attacks of Gosson and his Puritan successors, who denounced play-going. He himself joined the Admiral's men as an actor about 1595, the year which saw Kyd's death and very probably the first production at the Curtain of *Roméo and Juliet*. Heywood soon became better known as a lightning playwright, a kind of Elizabethan Scribe, rather than as a player. He claims to have knocked together in all some 220 plays, written to meet the stage exigencies of the moment, and printed or not as chance directed. Of these only some twenty-two have come down to us. In his homely conception of his vocation, in his uncritical attitude towards his material, in his frequent crudity and carelessness, he takes us back to the old-fashioned harlequin type of dramatic production, adapted to suit the momentary pressure of the theatrical market rather than aimed at fulfilling any theory of dramatic art. His plays are said to have been loosely and rapidly composed in taverns, and this history of their origin accords well enough with the elementary underlining of every situation, and with the general slovenliness of workmanship.

There is a wistful tenderness, a sense of the whimsical contrariety of human nature and of the weathercock variability of human passion, which give his most notable play, *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (produced 1603, printed 1607), an almost modern note. This belongs to the category of what Diderot and Mercier subsequently called *bourgeois* drama, enabling us to be the spectators of homely domestic scenes of everyday life. The singular merit of the play lies in the quiet beauty of the idea of the ending and in the truth and pathos of the character of Frankford. It is clumsily and carelessly constructed, and the essential figure of the wife is drawn with a faint and vacillating outline. She sins and repents and dies alike without justification. When Heywood came to write his next best play, *The English Traveller*, published in 1633, he was more under the influence of Ben Jonson than, as heretofore, of Shakespeare. The best scenes deal with the unselfish love of an old gentleman of the Frankford family, recently wedded to a young wife, for a very good young man called Geraldine. Grief is brought upon all the characters owing to the somewhat Quixotic

behaviour of this young man and the intrigues of a friend whom he introduces into his patron's house. But there are not many men in the whole world so unsuspecting as Frankford and old Wincott. The play has some of the quiet pathos of its predecessor, but an undue strain is put upon our credulity, and matters are made worse by a by-plot of the most whimsical nature derived in the main from the *Mostellaria* of Plautus. It contains a notable bravura passage, however, describing the drunken hallucinations of a band of roysterers over their cups. The most notable of Heywood's remaining comedies of domestic life are *The Lancashire Witches*, *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, *Fortune by Land and Sea*, *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*, and *The Fair Maid of the West*; while among his old-fashioned "histories" are *Edward IV.* and *If you Know not me you Know Nobody*. Some of his best poetry is inwoven in the four *Ages*, of which Heywood was very proud. He died about 1650.

John Webster, who, putting aside Shakespeare and Marlowe, probably ranks first among the tragic dramatists of our great dramatic epoch, was born in London, probably about 1580. In 1602 he began writing plays in partnership for the company of which Henslowe was the presiding spirit. In 1604 he was employed by the King's company to make additions to Marston's *Malcontent*, and a little later he was associated with Dekker in the plays of *Westward Ho!* and *Northward Ho!* in which the influence of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* has been traced. But Webster's title to fame rests almost exclusively upon the two great tragedies of revenge, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, both of which were almost certainly written, mainly under influence of Kyd, Shakespeare, and Marston, within five years of Shakespeare's death. In the whole of Elizabethan drama there are no plays outside Shakespeare which show such rare and intense imaginative power as these two. Their charnel-house atmosphere, their sinister suggestiveness, the gloom of their imaginative cynicism, and their appalling scent of churchyard mould, put them in a place apart. Webster was, no doubt, profoundly influenced by Shakespeare—by Shakespeare especially as the delineator of the cruelty of passion, the Shakespeare of *Othello*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*; while in his romantic idealism, and his appeal to

sheer horror, he connects rather with Marlowe and Kyd and Chettle than with his immediate contemporaries; though he shares the fondness of Beaumont and Fletcher for more or less illicit themes. *The White Devil*, or *The Tragedy of the Life and Death of Vittoria Corombona*, the famous Venetian courtesan, was first published as acted by the Queen's servants in 1612. The early scenes of this play introduce us at once to some of Webster's most distinctive characteristics. His close imitation of Shakespeare is seen in the manner in which he blends prose and verse, and uses rhymed couplets at every pause in the action; unlike Shakespeare, however, he does not understand how to motive these devices. The atmosphere of impending fate which Webster loves is achieved instantaneously in Act I, where Flameneo is introduced as pander procuring intimacy between his sister Vittoria, who is married to Camillo, and Brachiano, who is married to Isabella de' Medici. Flameneo is a Protestant Englishman's conception of a countryman of Borgia, and his reproaches to his mother when she interferes with his schemes are not merely revolting in their cynicism, but perfectly horrible. Webster never attenuates the horrors and seldom graduates the intensity of his effects. The drama progresses by the crude method of dumb show, in which Vittoria's husband and Brachiano's wife are both seen to meet their deaths in a childishly impossible manner. A trial scene, equally impressive and unreal, concludes with Vittoria's condemnation to a house of convertites or fallen women, from which she is successfully rescued by her paramour, Brachiano, preparatory to a general butchery of all the leading characters, making no empty form of Giovanni's concluding behest,

"Remove the bodies." If we judge the play by the ordinary external tests, we can hardly fail to come to the conclusion that in the endowments which go to make up a great dramatist, Webster is wholly lacking. The construction of *The White Devil* is either chaotic or, with its dumb shows and apparitions, merely childish. The power of characterisation shown is diminutive—sense of the actual curiously distorted, humour totally absent. There is romantic feeling and some intense poetry, but no breadth in the presentation; everywhere an over-elaboration of detail and a consistent disregard of *ensemble*.

Webster's second play, *The Duchess of Malfi*, was first printed in 1623, though it was probably acted by the Queen's servants six years earlier, and may have been written about 1613. Though flawed by grotesque incident and a complexity of horror similar to that of *The White Devil*, this play is far more capable of holding the imagination consecutively than its predecessor. The story on which the play is based had been told respectively in Italian, French, and English by Bandello, Belleforest, and Painter. And the tale is referred to as that of "the lady of the Strachey" in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, while it was also used by Lope de Vega in *El Majordomo de la Duquesa de Amalfi*.¹ Webster admits no cheerful or lively variation into his lugubrious tragedy, which is everywhere encrusted with sombre imagery, and made hideous by the paraphernalia of torture. His object seems to be to distil from it the maximum of tragic horror of which it is susceptible. Webster's imaginative writing is magnificent in certain scenes, but he is strangely dependent and imitative. He imitates Shakespeare, Bacon, Montaigne, and himself, and

¹ Bandello relates how a widowed princess of Amalfi who retains her beauty, and with it a fear lest by re-marriage she should become once more a cipher in her own court, decides to marry a subject, and selects for the purpose her own intendant or steward, Antonio de Bologna, Antonio being not only handsome, but also affectionate and discreet. The wedded pair live happily for some years, in the course of which a son is born to the Duchess, without exciting suspicion or causing the circumstance of their union to be known outside a very small circle. At the birth of their second child the Duchess is less prudent, and her brother, the Cardinal of Arragon, hears reports which cause him to place a number of spies in her household. Antonio seeks safety in a temporary retirement at Ancona. There, however, he is joined by the Duchess, who is resolved to brave out the matter with her kinsfolk. Such an insult to the family pride is deeply resented by her brothers. They bring influence to effect the expulsion of the Duchess and her household from Ancona, and set horsemen to follow the fugitives. Perceiving that they are being tracked, the Duchess entreats Antonio to leave her on his swift horse, hoping thus to avert the worst consequences of her brothers' rage. But such hopes are ill-founded; the pursuers, having captured her, cruelly murder both the Duchess and her infants in a solitary castle by the wayside. Antonio falls a victim to their *bravi* in Milan a few days later. This is one of the sombre traditions with which Boccaccio and Bandello are wont to diversify their coarser but more enlivening fables. It just suited the genius and temper of Webster. Ten of the personages are butchered in this play, eight in *The White Devil*.

in *The Duchess* he ransacks Sidney's *Arcadia* for figurative passages and metaphorical expressions, incorporating whole passages of Sidney's prose, just as Shakespeare does with North's *Plutarch* in *Coriolanus*.

Cyril Tourneur (1575—1626)¹ was another student of the drama of his time who threw in his lot with the cultivators of the *frisson*, a large tribe of Elizabethans and Jacobean, from Kyd, Marlowe, and the author of *Arden of Feversham*, down to Middleton, Webster, and Ford, reinforced occasionally by Fletcher, Marston, and even the staid Massinger. A noble brood! says Hazlitt; but we cannot agree with him that Shakespeare was of it—at least after his early work on a small portion of *Titus Andronicus*. Shakespeare, it is true, was tempted to use the material of the terror-mongers—in *Hamlet*, for instance; but with what a magician's wand did he alone transform it!

Cyril Tourneur is only really memorable on account of two plays. The first to be published (1607) was *The Revenger's Tragedie, As it hath been sundry times acted by the King's Majesties Servants*. Four years later was published *The Atheist's Tragedie; or, the Honest Man's Revenge, As in divers places it hath often beene acted, Written by Cyril Tourneur*. The order of publication was probably the inverse of that in which the plays were composed. The *Atheist's Tragedie* must have been written after 1600, as there is a reference to Dekker's *Fortune's Tennis* of that date, but not much later than 1603-4, while the siege of Ostend was still in men's minds. A third drama by Tourneur, *The Nobleman*, licensed to Edward Blount on February 15th, 1612, and acted at the court by the King's men on February 23rd, 1611-12, is said to have been destroyed by Warburton's cook.

The plays of Tourneur suggest a deliberate attempt made by the dramatist to satisfy the lust of his countrymen for Italian horrors. Details of villainy, monstrous vice, and poisoning were heaped up for this purpose: thus in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, for instance, the story of the poisoning of Louisa Strozzi for resisting

Duke Alexander's lust is woven into that of the duke's murder by his pretended pander, Lorenzo. The crime of a country which was believed, like Italy, to represent the brain of Europe and to possess an æsthetic monopoly of the world fascinated the coarser-fibred Englishman of the time. Men like Tourneur could lay themselves out to satisfy this morbid curiosity, which the theatrical managers of the day fostered by every means in their power. The tragedy of blood thus acquired a strong vogue and had a large number of ardent votaries. A needy artist in the first place, Tourneur in the course of his attempts to supply lurid intensity would seem to have lost his own equilibrium. A genuine feeling of the desolation of evil oppressed him, and with the true Elizabethan gift of converting emotion into expression, he utters cries not wholly grotesque nor insincere, but dark and lamentable as the moaning of despair; his landscape is volcanic, unrelieved by a single clear spot on the horizon. What surprises one in this close and stinking atmosphere is the suppleness and beauty of Tourneur's verse. It must have been a depraved curiosity which has consigned the imagination of a poet to such a crypt of sin and evil as this! Yet there is no mistaking here and there that the strain emerging is that of a true poet. In Tourneur and Ford we must be content to recognise the eccentricity of a great imaginative movement.

John Ford, the younger son of a Devonshire gentleman of independent means, was baptised at Ilsington, near Ashburton, on April 17th, 1586, the year of Sidney's death. He was thus almost of an age with Massinger, though his dramatic career presents few points of resemblance to that of the hard-working and practical playwright. He seems to have been a short time at Oxford, and was certainly admitted to the Middle Temple in 1602. He wrote verses, prose tracts, and a masque called *Honor Triumphant* (1606), and years elapsed before he began to apprentice himself to the stage by putting a hand to some of the loose constructions of Dekker and Rowley; a small fee would doubtless have put

¹ The first attempt at a connected account of Tourneur's very obscure life was made by the present writer in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He was probably the son of Richard Turnor, a lieutenant at the Brill in Holland—one of Vere's soldiers. Cyril wrote a panegyric eley upon Sir Francis Vere in 1609. A connection with the Cecil family procured him a post in the Low Countries, similar to that held by the poet Josua Sylvester. Sir Edward Cecil's arrival in Holland seemed of good augury to the dramatist, and he secured a post as secretary to that general in the Cadiz expedition. Unfortunately it proved a complete failure, and Tourneur died on the way home at Kinsale, in Ireland, February 28th, 1626.

the experience of those redoubtable stage carpenters at the disposal of any educated amateur who aspired to theatrical renown. It was not until 1628, when he was well over forty, that Ford felt himself in a position to furnish a piece for the theatre in his own name; *The Lover's Melancholy*, as the play was called, was printed in 1629. It is a thoroughly imitative piece, full of reminiscences of Shakespeare and Fletcher, with a masque suggested by Burton's *Anatomy*, and some buffooneries which sink below the exiguous standard exacted from Rowley. But it served its purpose admirably in showing Ford the groove in which his narrow genius could most advantageously work—that, namely, of inexorable tragedy. The great themes of tragedy had already been exhausted. The *naïveté*, the directness of passion, the interpolation of the burlesque, the bewildering alternation of motive—all had been tried and exhausted. Webster had decked the stage with cypress and grave clothes, and had elicited sympathy for a harlot almost as fascinating as wicked. With the deliberate intention of making his audience's flesh creep, Ford, unshackled by Webster's sense of moral retribution, determined with all the *sang-froid* of the amateur artist to go farther afield—much farther. In *'Tis Pity she's a Whore*, first published in 1633, Ford treats of the guilty love of Giovanni for his sister Annabella.

The moralist who regards this terrible play will hardly be conciliated by the unmistakable power which it exhibits. But it is marked throughout by an economy of rhetoric, and by a concentrated intensity in the dialogue which is extremely rare outside Shakespeare. The guilty figures of brother and sister stand out in bold relief with indubitable grandeur of outline, and the poet invests them, in spite of their depravation, with a kind of heroism which places them far above the comparatively sordid figure of the husband. Ford had evidently noted the sympathy which Webster had evoked for a character so thoroughly corrupt as that of Vittoria Corombona, and he represents here the same superficial innocence of tone which gives a semblance of beauty and of the ideal to evil, the most ugly and repulsive. The poison of this poetic treatment of mortal sin is thus dissolved in a cup of almost seductive sweetness. None of the poetic force with which this play is so directly charged is frittered away upon irrelevant decoration.

The emotion in it is absorbing. It may be purchased at too high a price; but it is centred and unified with almost the same intentness that is to be found in *Othello*. To pull the bow as tight again and to do so in a legitimate manner proved beyond Ford's capacity. The best attempt he made was that in his next play, *The Broken Heart*, printed in 1633. In this an ingenious plot is directed with single aim upon a situation in the fifth act in which the heroine is subjected to an intensity of suffering, the accumulation of which upon the seemingly stoical heroine has the effect of killing her outright. The play is well constructed and finely moulded in all its externals, but the characters are lifeless. They have no existence apart from the immediate circumstances in which we find them. And the scattered beauties, not excluding those of the famous scene in which Calantha hears successively of the deaths of her father, her friend, and her brother, will not compensate for the sheer extravagance of this *dénouement*. It is extraordinary to find a critic of Lamb's nice humour and discernment working himself up into a fervour over this scene, which ends thus: "The expression of this transcendent scene almost bears me in imagination to Calvary and the Cross"!

Ford wrote several other single-handed plays. Of these, *Love's Sacrifice* is a coarse tissue of passion and revenge not wholly dissimilar to the plays which had preceded it. *The Lady's Trial*, acted in 1638, shows that Ford had not altogether abandoned the idea of developing a vein of pleasantry, conspicuously absent though this had been from his previous attempts. His by-plots generally are the reverse of entertaining. The chronicle history of Perkin Warbeck is Ford's one attempt in the direction of historical drama. Ford had the best material of any dramatic chronicler of the age—Bacon's admirable Life of Henry VII. But Ford's sense of humour and power of developing character were wholly inadequate to the competent treatment of such a theme. Ford's versification is a good deal more Shakespearean than that of most of his contemporaries. It is fluent without a deficiency of depth, while it sacrifices no shade of meaning to the requirements of metrical composition. The lyrics in *The Broken Heart* display a melodious fancy. As a general rule Ford is far less prone to experiments in his verse, metrical

or immetrical, than either Webster or Fletcher, and his verse, owing to its masculine character, approximates more nearly to the versification of Cyril Tourneur.

Philip Massinger, the son of a gentleman in the service of the Earl of Pembroke, was born at Salisbury in 1583, studied at Oxford (St. Alban Hall) between 1602 and 1606, when he made his way to London, though he is not known to have commenced playwright until nearly ten years later. He probably worked his way up like Shakespeare, though with much greater deliberation; it is known that he began as a play mender and renovator. Few writers surpassed him in practical experience of stage requirements. He wrote a very large number of plays in collaboration. He flattered Shakespeare by frequent imitation, and was Fletcher's principal assistant. A good many of his own pieces have been destroyed, but fifteen at least of the plays which he wrote unaided have come down to us. He lived on almost to the closure of the drama by the Puritans; was found dead in his bed in his Bankside lodgings one March morning of 1640; and was buried in the neighbouring church of St. Saviour, near the author of *The Faithful Shepherdess*.

Massinger's plays, as a whole, are marked by an even skill in workmanship. He is clever at composition, prolific of rhetorical blank verse suited to almost every requirement, and a consummate master of all the professional technique of the stage. He excels in the somewhat mechanical character-designing of the Caroline period. He is a master of stage verse and histrionic eloquence. For satire, especially for political satire, he has an exceptional knack; but he strangely lacks that overmastering passion, that brief moment of inspiration which seems to have been a birthmark with almost all his contemporaries among writers for the stage. His verses somewhat miss the catch of the Elizabethan manner. He was a stranger to that alacrity with which even a dramatic underling of that period seemed to tumble to a tunable lay. He is never to be seen reeling under the impulse of the vehement emotion which breathes in the spontaneous, if too lawless, vigour of the older race. The facility of mere convention had replaced the vital energy which characterised the immediate successors of Shakespeare.

The plays that Massinger wrote unaided

appear to have been written during the eighteen years between 1618 and 1636. The first of these is *The Duke of Milan*, a sombre tragedy based upon a story, which is partly historical but more imaginary, on the fall of Ludovico Sforza. In this play, as in *The Emperor of the East*, written twelve years later, the hero, who is a man of passionate and ungovernable temper, unjustly suspects his wife of infidelity. No dramatist of the time repeats himself more than Massinger is in the habit of doing. He also repeats others—so many *genres* of play had been utterly used up. The most practical of all contemporary playwrights, he developed strict habits of literary economy, economy not only of passion, but also in forms of rhetoric, in which his plays ordinarily abound—none more so than his early tragedies, *The Duke of Milan*, *The Unnatural Combat*, *The Renegade*, and *The Roman Actor*. Some of the scenes in this last are finely conceived. Domitian the emperor plays a part in stage tragedy and kills outright his rival in love, the actor Paris, who had previously defended the dignity of his art with success against an impeachment by the Senate. Of semi-political plays, Massinger perpetrated several, the most remarkable being the two tragi-comedies, *The Bondman*, acted in 1623, and *The Maid of Honour*, played at the Phoenix, in Drury Lane, somewhere about 1630. In *The Maid of Honour*, Fulgentio, the minion of Robert, King of Sicily, is certainly meant for Buckingham.

Discouraged though Massinger often seems and deficient in nervous edge, his observation and satirical energy are sufficiently attested by such a comedy as *The City Madam* of 1632; but his greatest achievement undoubtedly is the racy Jonsonian comedy, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, probably written in the winter season of 1625-6, though not printed until 1632. The play contains two character types, Sir Giles Overreach, who is almost worthy to rank with Volpone, and Justice Greedy, a farcical figure hardly, if at all, inferior to Morose. Both are superb stage creations, and were the delight of leading actors down to the collapse of the licensed houses in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The intrigue and construction are alike of a thoroughly histrionic character. The plot might have been taken direct from the comedy of Terence, and it certainly owes

something nearer at hand to *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. The satire concentrated into the delineation of Overreach and Greedy is unmistakably after the pattern of Ben Jonson, even if it lacks Jonson's severe originality of treatment. The vitality of the play is due, of course, to the one stage figure of Sir Giles Overreach. As with Tamburlaine, Barabas, Shylock, Sir Epicure Mammon, the theme is the energy and will-power of a single man under the dominion of superhuman lust. Massinger has none of the power of dealing with an abstraction or creature of *virtù* in a poetic manner as Marlowe or Shakespeare had. But he atones to some extent for the deficiency by his superabundance of stage sense and his knowledge of what is due to the part of Overreach as a lead of the first magnitude. Few parts, undoubtedly, have had such a great stage career as that of Sir Giles Overreach.

The last of the giants of the English theatre before the deluge of Puritanism, not a giant in individual stature, but a direct continuator of the tradition of Shakespeare, was James Shirley. Born in the City of London on September 13th, 1596, Shirley was admitted to Merchant Taylors' School in October, 1608, and passed thence direct to St. John's College, Oxford, four years later. Laud, who was then president of the college, was interested in Shirley's literary precocity, but is said to have objected to a man with a large mole on his face taking holy orders. Shirley migrated to Catharine Hall, Cambridge, and there wrote his graceful poem *Narcissus* in undisguised imitation of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. About 1622 he abandoned the English Church for that of Rome, and followed teaching as a profession at St. Albans Grammar School. At St. Albans about 1625 he wrote his first successful comedy called *Love Tricks*. His success in his new vocation might have led to a place in the royal household, so high in favour was gentlemanly comedy held at court. But Shirley was a studious, literary type of man who seems to have preferred the study to the perils of court favour. Yet Shirley's facile and modest temper won him the favour of several persons of rank, and of not a few of the contemporary wits and dramatists such as Ford, Massinger, Habington, Randolph, and May. The successful production of his plays was broken only by visits

to Ireland in 1636 and 1638. Three or four of his plays were produced in Dublin, and during the decline of the king's fortunes he seems to have been settled obscurely in London. Under the influence of the great blight which befell all dramatic ambitions Shirley fell back upon teaching a small school, while, according to Wood, he spent much unacknowledged labour as a drudge for the remorseless translator, John Ogilby. After Shirley had seen much of the world in various conditions, he and his second wife Frances were driven by the dismal conflagration that happened in London in 1666 from their habitation near to Fleet Street into the parish of St. Giles's-in-the-Field, where, overcome by the fright and the losses they had sustained, they both died, and were buried in one grave at St. Giles's on October 29th, 1666. One of his sons became butler at Furnival's Inn. Over twenty comedies and half as many tragedies or tragi-comedies by Shirley are still extant. Among the comedies *The Wedding*, first given in 1626; *The Brothers*, performed in the same year; *Hyde Park*, acted 1632; *The Gamester*, 1634; and *The Lady of Pleasure*, 1635, are among the most diverting. The plot of *The Gamester* is said to have been partly suggested by and the development highly approved by his Majesty Charles I. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is said to have owed its inception to a royal suggestion taking the ordinary form of a command. But *The Gamester* probably stands alone in its reliance upon a fable that emanated directly from the reigning sovereign, though, like other fabulists of the period, Charles I. seems to have been indebted to the Italian *novellieri*, probably in this case to the *novelle* of Celio Malespini. Of the tragedies, *The Traitor*, first acted in 1631, and *Love's Cruelty* of the same year, would probably be preferred by most readers to Shirley's own favourite, *The Cardinal*, which was apparently written in direct emulation of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*. Shirley was a skilful constructor, and most of his plots were of his own invention. But he stands in much the same position to the two generations of dramatists that preceded him as the Caracci stood to the great floreal period of Italian art, and it was almost inevitable that his talent should feed on the imaginations of Shakespeare and Jonson, Fletcher, Massinger, and Webster. He reproduces their style, their diction, and

even their tone, in much the same way as Sir Walter Besant in his happier moments reflects something of the manner of Dickens or Thackeray. A natural taste and "elegant smoothness" of style came to the aid of his adroitness, and he worked buoyantly upon the old lines. He was excellent at soliloquies and descriptions, and had a genuine sense of the picturesque.

It seems rather doubtful whether Shirley should take a place upon his own merits in the *chorus vatum* of those days when poet and playwright were one. But he cannot well be divorced from that fellowship, not so much, as Lamb says, on account of any transcendent genius in himself, but because he was the last of a great race, all of whom spoke nearly the same language and had a set of moral feelings and notions in common. The gradual exhaustion of the great talents paved the way naturally for a continuation of mediocre endowments such as that represented by Shirley. His work has plenty of

vivacity, and is clothed in delicate shades of grey and of green, but it lacks the azure and the purple of which the great masters could in fit season be so lavish. It is interesting to reflect that he might, conceivably, have been present at the first performance of one of Shakespeare's latest and of Dryden's earliest productions. From Marlowe to Shirley, in the short space of fifty years, a complete literary movement has been traversed. The greatest impulse that literary art has ever known has risen, culminated, declined, and finally worn itself out. Says Maeterlinck, "I should never finish if I had to cite the names of all these dramatists, for never has humanity blossomed so spontaneously and so abundantly in inexhaustible poetry, in beauty so multi-form and so profound. One might fancy oneself in the midst of a miraculous springtide of the human mind. Truly were those the days of marvellous promise. One would have said that humanity was going to develop into something altogether new."¹

¹ The editions of Beaumont and Fletcher are by Weber (1812), Alexander Dyce (11 vols., 1843-6), and the "Variorum editions" now in progress, one under the direction of A. H. Bullen, the other issuing from the Pitt Press. Ten principal plays were given in the Mermaid Series (2 vols., ed. Strachey). The studies by Hazlitt and Lowell, and Ashley H. Thorndike's *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare* (1901), are also to be consulted.—The standard edition of Ben Jonson is that by William Gifford (9 vols., 1816), reissued with additions by Cunningham in 1875. The best plays appeared in 3 vols. of the Mermaid Series, 1893-5. The exploration of Jonson still remains very incomplete. There are suggestive introductory studies by Swinburne (cf. *Fortnightly*, 1888), Herford (Mermaid edition), Symonds (Canterbury Poets), Dowden, Schelling (*Timber*), and others; a very useful introduction to *Every Man in his Humor*, by H. B. Wheatley; and there are copiously annotated American editions of *The Alchemist* (Hathaway), *Bartholomew Fair* (Alden), *The Staple of News* (De Winter), and *Poetaster* (Mallory), among the "Yale Studies" of 1903-5. Add to these a brilliant causerie by T. E. Brown (*New Review*, xiv.). A competent edition is expected of Prof. Herford.—Of Marston there are editions by Halliwell-Phillipps (1856) and A. H. Bullen (3 vols., 1887).—The standard edition of Middleton is also that of A. H. Bullen (8 vols., 1885-6); and see the essays of Swinburne, Ellis, Wiggin on the Middleton-Rowley plays, and Hugo Jung (1904).—Heywood's plays were edited by J. Pearson (6 vols., 1874), and in the Mermaid Series by Verity, 1888.—Webster's plays have been edited by Dyce (1830 and 1857), and re-edited by Hazlitt. His two best plays were edited with those of Tourneur for the Mermaid Series by J. A. Symonds. See also Elmer E. Stoll, *John Webster: The Periods of his Work* (1905), and an interesting criticism of *The White Devil* by W. W. Greg (*Mod. Lang. Quarterly*, December, 1900), who takes an extremely high view of the consummate art of the construction. For Webster's filchings from Sidney see Charles Crawford in *Notes and Queries*, October, 1904.—There are editions of Massinger by Coxeter, Gifford, Hartley Coleridge (Massinger and Ford, 1840), Cunningham, and a selection in the Mermaid Series (2 vols., ed. Symonds, 1904); and for Massinger the student is referred to Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, Symonds's *Studies in Two Literatures*, and *Westminster Review*, 1899.—James Shirley (*Dramatic Works*, 6 vols., 1833, and six plays, Mermaid Series, ed. Gosse) is supplemented by Dr. Nissen's *James Shirley* (Hamburg, 1901).—Ford, Heywood, Dekker, and Cyril Tourneur are sufficiently represented in the Mermaid Series. For the later dramatists generally, in addition to the notes by Lamb, Coleridge, and Hazlitt, the student must refer first and foremost to the highly eulogistic studies by Swinburne in his collected essays, and then to the works of Ward, Lowell, Mezières, Jusserand, and Bodenstedt (*Shakespeare's Zeit-Genossen*, Berlin, 1858).

CHAPTER X

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEOAN PROSE.—I

“O all-seeing Light, and eternal Life of all things, to whom nothing is either so great that it may resist or so small that it is contemned, look upon my miserie with thine eye of mercie, and let thine infinite power vouchsafe to limite out some proportion of deliverance unto me, as to thee shall seem most convenient. Let not injurie, O Lord, triumphe over me, and let my faults by thy hands be corrected, and make not mine unjuste enemie the minister of thy Justice. But yet, my God, if in thy wisdome, this be the aptest chastizement for my inexcusable follie; if this low bondage be fittest for my over-hie desires; if the pride of my not-inough humble harte, be thus to be broken, O Lord, I yeeld unto thy will, and joyfully embrace what sorrow thou wilt have me suffer.”—The famous prayer used by Charles I. in *Arcadia*, Book III.

John Lyly—Sidney's *Arcadia*—Greene—Dekker—Nash—Nicholas Breton—Hall—Overbury—Earle—James I.—Bacon.

THE first author who risked an original novel in English on his own account had a phenomenal success. This was a young man of some twenty-five summers, a grandson of the once terrible William Lilly, pedagogue and grammarian. John Lyly, as he usually called himself, was a Kentish man and was fresh from Magdalen, Oxford, when in December, 1578, he hatched the memorable novel *Euphues: The Anatomie of Wit*. The resounding character of the success achieved could hardly have been foreseen by any one—even by John Lyly himself. For nearly fifteen years thenceforth he became *arbiter elegantiarum* in all matters pertaining to literature in the court of the Great Queen. Recognised as the high priest of a political and witty fashion, he not only encroached upon the attention paid by fashionable dames to the sit of a ruff or the health of a pet dog, and imposed his very phrases and sentiments upon their obedient lips, but he was even paid the sincerer homage of imitation by the greatest wits of the age, including not only Greene and Lodge, but William Shakespeare himself. The supplementary volume known as *Euphues and his England* appeared in 1580. Like More's *Hythlodaye*, *Euphues* is a moral philosopher who holds forth omnisciently on religion, travel, government, marriage, ethics, and every subject under the sun. Unlike *Hythlodaye*, he is an ineffable bore.

Lyly's highly artificial style of ornamentation has proved extremely interesting to literary archæologists. In it are to be found, as in a meeting-place, many affectations of contemporary stylists on the continent, many hints from Lyly's contemporary, the rhetor, Arthur Wilson, and not a few supposed peculiarities of Lyly's imitators and successors. What attracted Lyly's readers in the 'eighties of the sixteenth century, however, was not merely his extravagantly elaborate style, but also his high didactic manner and his judicious flattery of Englishmen and more particularly Englishwomen. Great as was his influence among the ladies of the court (who, we are told, were all Lyly's scholars), it was short-lived, and the novelist fluttered about the court a soured and discontented man until, upon his death in November, 1606, hardly any one knew anything either of the writer or his book. Neglect was its fate for over two centuries. Yet its importance in the history of English letters is something considerable, for in it first we leave epic and mediæval tales of chivalry, and approach the novel of manners. There is no longer question of Arthur and his marvellous knights, of Roland or Palmerin, of Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hamtoun, Huon of Bordeaux, or Amadis of Gaul, but rather of contemporary men, who in spite of excessive oratorical finery possess some resemblance to reality. There is some attempt, at any rate,

to depict contemporary manners, and conversations are reported in which the tone of well-born persons of the period may often be detected.

Of the heirs and imitators of Lyly, the well-to-do Thomas Lodge (*Rosalynde*, 1590), the disreputable Robert Greene (*Pandosto*, 1588; *Menaphon*, 1589), the unscrupulous Anthony Munday (*Zelauto*, 1580), the edifying Brian Melbancke (*Philotimus*), Warner, Dickenson, Breton, Rich, Emmanuel Ford and the rest, the fact that they are the costly and exclusive delight of the antiquary and the bibliophile may be allowed to speak for itself. They were evidently written with facility during the flood-tide of an early fiction market, and so much easy writing makes uncommonly hard reading. The story in all these "novels," as we must call them, meanders now between banks of dialogue and now at its own sweet will, now through a marsh of mythology and moral instruction, and again through a mead of miscellaneous verse. But for all the flowers in the meadows and the pleasant conceits in its course, the Elizabethan novel must be pronounced to be wholly unreadable by the reader of to-day. A few of these stories claim to have been written for the delectation of the gentlemen no less than "the ladies of the court"; but in a modern view they will appear almost without exception to have been written for the benefit of very patient children.¹

The popularity of *Euphues* and of the books which it inspired was waning when Sidney's still more famous *Arcadia* was first published in quarto by Ponsonbie as *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* in 1590.² It was the fashion of Pope superseding that of Dryden, or the taste for Byron eclipsing that for Scott. Yet Sir Philip Sidney when he wrote it in 1580, or thereabouts, did not write for the court or the public at all, but only for the delectation of his sister, the celebrated Countess of Pembroke, and her coterie at "delicious Penshurst." Her name would be a sanctuary for such a trifle of gossamer, as the author called his romance of "cloud-cuckoo land." To please

her he made Love the pivot of his phantasy, and sent her the successive sheets as fast as ever he penned them. The explanation that the *Arcadia*, with its marvellous adventures, its rainbow descriptions, its pastoral nobles and countrymen, its stately kings and queens, was an ardent and immature production, in which the young author was enabled to deliver his fermenting brain of a crowd of theories and love fancies (in verse and prose), fits the work much better than the theory of his friend and encomiast, Fulke Greville, that it was written with high moral and political purpose. The moral and political influence of a half-pastoral, high chivalric fairy tale is not usually very great.

The popularity of the romance was owing in no small measure to its being a manual of modish affectation in speech, and of gentleman-like accomplishments, of chivalric courtesy and refined ingenuity. Like its subsequent French counterpart, the *Astrée* of D'Urfé, it was a perfect rendezvous of classic and romantic conceits.

The literary distinction of the *Arcadia* is largely due to the fact that it combines two affectations, two strained ideals—the pastoral and the chivalric (Scenery and Love). The poetical landscape, such as the famed description of Arcadia, is derived from the pastoral of Sannazaro (*Arcadia*, 1504). The love plot is imitated from the famous *Diana Enamorada*, 1542, of the Portuguese Jorge de Montemayor. The second element, on the whole, predominates, and the romantic adventures of the love-lorn Pyrocles and Musidorus are of just such a nature as Don Quixote would have doted on. Many Arcadian affectations, such as the artificiality of the cadence and the exquisite monotonous obsequiousness of courtesy, are pre-eminently Spanish. It is in the main a thorough "coterie" piece, written by a very young and very serious literary amateur and doctrinaire. The story is extraordinarily intricate and rambling, and is encumbered by episodes gravely ludicrous and extravagant. Sidney deliberately eschews Euphuism, but he

¹ The only writer who has made anything out of them is M. Jusserand, who in his *English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare*, and in vol. ii. of his *Histoire Littéraire du Peuple Anglaise*, has discovered a delightful method of poking sympathetic fun at their ingenuous imbecility.

² A second edition in folio supplemented and newly arranged by Sidney's sister appeared in 1593. There is a good reprint by Prof. Sommer, 1891. For the biography of Sidney consult Lives by Zouch (1808), J. A. Symonds (1886), and Fox Bourne (1892), and compare Sidney Lee's *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century* (1904) and Edith J. Morley's study of *Works of Sir Philip Sidney* (1901).

substitutes for it a style hardly less artificial than that of Lyly. Alliteration, paronomasia, repetition, and personification are all found in excess. Yet the very excess of poetic licence (for Sidney's prose is nothing if not poetic), more especially in regard to redundant ornament, is the cause and fountain of many surpassing excellences. Such are many delicate touches of imagination, and not a few phrases and passages of a noble, enchanting, and at times almost lyrical beauty.¹

A congener of Greene whom one imagines writing in a cellar against time, fluent, haphazard, reckless, jovial, dissipated, and unabashed by Fortune was Thomas Nash, author of a kind of historical *Gil Blas*, imitated in part from the Spanish rogue-stories (*Lazarillo* and *Guzman*), with an admixture of autobiography in the manner of Greene, and called *Jack Wilton* (1594). Greene, Dekker, and Nash were three curious types who anticipated Murger's *Vie de Bohème* in a metropolis hardly sufficiently developed to welcome such precocious children. Their lot collectively was dramatic job-work, pamphlets, poems, novels, the bottle, loose women, Henslowe (the well-known impresario who commissioned plays from the jobbers), the Clink, literary squabbles, and premature decline and death. Nash was perhaps the gayest and most good-humoured; Greene the most fluent and the biggest liar; Dekker the most perceptive and the most poetic—he rivalled Breton in the delicacy with which he could tune a stave or vamp a lament in a minor key. But Nash also could lilt a pretty song, and, gross borrower from Latin, French, and Italian though he seems, he was the most original prose writer of his age, full of artistic theories as to the use of adjectives and the divinity of Aretino, Rabelais, Sidney, Marlowe, and “heavenly” Spenser, a connoisseur of metaphors and expletives and a bigoted devotee of the *mot propre*.

The work of Nash, with its numerous eccentricities of style, subject, and point of

view, serves as a convenient link between the novelists and the satirical essayists, who literally swarmed in London during the late and post-Elizabethan periods. The prince of these pamphleteers, excelling in fluency and facetious quaintness, and a very Defoe in respect of ductility, was Thomas Dekker. More vividly even than Nash and Greene he takes us back to the crooked lanes, the gabled houses and creaking signs of old London. The crude verbiage in which so much of Dekker's humour is enshrouded soon rendered his books obsolete, but as a mirror of the manners of his time they are as invaluable as those of *Tom Brown* and *Ned Ward* of the age of Queen Anne, while in literary quality they are superior. Indirectly they have formed the groundwork of almost every attempt to arrive at a clear picture of the social life of the period.

Dekker's plays are full of sidelights upon the social life of the day. But even richer in this kind of material are the series of prose tracts commenced in 1603 with *The Wonderful Yere*. In this he describes the death of the Queen, the proclamation at the Coronation of the King, concluding with a vivid picture (with which Defoe must have been familiar) of the ravages caused by the plague. He returned to the subject in one of his last tracts, penned when people were fleeing from the city, and entitled *A Rod for Runawayes* (1625). In the same year, 1603, appeared his *Batchelor's Banquet*, a satire on different types of women suggested by the fifteenth-century *Quinze Joies de Mariage*. From the sermonising tones of *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606) Dekker passes by an easy transition to a coarse volume of *Jests to make you Merrie* (1607), a favourite of Robert Burton's. *The Belman of London*, which went through three editions in 1608, is a skilful *rifacimento* of Harman's *Caveat for Commen Cursitors*. Dekker anticipates Vidocq in describing the different varieties of rogues, such as priggers, kinchin coves, swigmen, and others; and he

¹ That Sidney could also upon occasion excel in perfectly direct and simple speech is nowhere better shown than in the famous prayer of Pamela (Book III. chap. vi.), which Charles I. is said to have used upon the scaffold. The sentences have more than a ring of the Prayer Book; and it is impossible to acquiesce in Milton's condemnation of the dying King because he used so noble a supplication, even though it was “stolen word for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god, and that in no serious book.” Few books were copied more than the *Arcadia*. Some dramatists, such as Webster, conveyed figures and phrases from it wholesale into their plays. Sidney also wrote a masque, *The Lady of the May*, 1578, in which Rhombus, a schoolmaster, is a feeble prototype of Holofernes in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*. As “warbler of poetic prose” Sidney was regarded with curiosity by Cowper, with scholarly interest by Southey, and with contempt by Horace Walpole, who calls his romance “tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral.”

follows this up by *Lanthorne and Candlelight*, describing fresh types of suburban scoundrelism. In 1609 appeared the most graphic of all his sketch books, *The Guls Hornbook*. The tract is to some extent modelled on the German Dedekind's *Grobianus* (1549), a world-famous satire of bad manners, inverted etiquette, gross living, eccentric garb and slovenly habits. It had been Dekker's intention to turn portions of *Grobianus* into English verse, and he admits that his book retains a relish of Grobianism, but on further reflection he altered the shape, and of a Dutchman fashioned a mere Englishman. His sketch remains the most vivid picture that can be found of the night side of the town and of the manners and customs of the Jacobean gallant. It is particularly valuable for its caricatures of the playgoers of Shakespeare's prime.

In prose essay as in lyrical eclogue Dekker is perhaps surpassed by the lighter vein and more facile touch of Nicholas Breton. One of the best of the prose tracts that came from this versatile pen is one of the very earliest, an angling idyll called *Wits Trenchmour in a Conference had betwixt a Scholler and an Angler*, 1597, in which but for the interminable digressions to which he was so prone, Breton might have rivalled his successor, Izaak Walton, upon his own ground. In the same year Breton wrote *The Figure of Foure*, in which proverbial small change is served up in various ways. There is no controverting many of Breton's propositions. He advances in fours: four good medicines—abstinence, exercise, mirth, patience: four men needful in an army—a good commander, a good scout, a good sentinel, and a good gunner: four chief notes of a good housewife—early rising, close gathering, safe keeping, and well bestowing. There is more humour in the *Court and Country*, 1618, the old controversy of the debating society between the town courtier and the rustic. The speeches are formal and much too long;

but the champions begin to kindle to their work when the courtier imputes an evil smell of garlic to the countryman, who retorts that his town cousin stinks of tobacco. In *Fantasticks*, 1626, Breton gives us compact little essays on the world, money, love, harvest, spring, summer, and then the months seriatim. Those on April and May are prose pastorals, as delicate as those of Washington Irving, and less artificial. After the months come the hours, and so round the clock to an end. These charming vignettes of Breton's are almost as rich in material for social portraiture as those of Dekker; they are written, too, with racy spontaneity in a vernacular undefiled either by coarseness or affectation.

Among Dekker's rivals in exploring the seamy side or vagabondage of the metropolis should at least be enumerated Samuel Rowlands, who in *Martin Markall*, 1610, professes to correct Dekker's observations on the roaring boys of the town contained in *The Belman*. His *Letting of Humours Blood in the Head-vaine* was so scandalous that it was burned with contumely in the kitchen of the Stationers' Company. *The Search for Money*, 1609, of William Rowley, the dramatist, shows how popular these now obscure attempts to dredge the sewers for eccentric types once were. But all these so-called satires were partially, at any rate, vamped up from materials turned over by Greene, Peele, and Nash. Better known, by name at least, is the earlier and puritanically motivated *Anatomie of Abuses*, by Philip Stubbes.

The time was now approaching—late in James's and early in Charles I.'s time—when a regular epidemic of short, generalised character-sketches broke out in England. This is not, like the sonnet-mania, to be traced directly to France, for there is little doubt that the impulse was due to the translation of the Greek *Characters* of Theophrastus into Latin, made by Isaac Casaubon in 1592.¹ Theophrastus

¹ It is true that something in the nature of the "character" had appeared in England long before Casaubon's version of Theophrastus, for in 1565 John Awdeley produced his *Fraternitie of Vacabondes*, followed two years later by Thomas Harman's *Caveat for Common Cursetors, or Vagabones*, a curious series of essays on various kinds of thieves, tramps, and beggars, with their slang. Harman was freely imitated, not to say copied, by Dekker, in his *Belman of London*, while Dekker had independently produced something closely approximating character-sketches in his *Batchelor's Banquet* of 1603, as had several of the writers of the innumerable touchstones, glasses, mirrors, and anatomies of the hour. But such productions as these could hardly have led to the Theophrastian essay, at which, as we should have expected, first attempts were made by notable scholars—to wit, Joseph Hall and Ben Jonson. Most of Jonson's plays are "character" plays, and in the *dramatis personæ* of *Every Man out of his Humor*, first printed in 1600, he condenses his conceptions into the form of a series of labels which are in effect character-sketches. (See West's Introduction to Earle, and Miss Lee's Introduction to *Selections from La Bruyère and Vauvenargues*, 1902.)

(d. 284 B.C.) was the initiator of the *genre*, which is a very difficult one. Fine portraiture is not possible under its conditions. No two men are exactly alike, and a portrait cannot at once portray a class and an individual. The ideal is to hit the mean between abstract statement and details calculated to rob the portrait of all generic interest. In this Theophrastus succeeded so well that he was not surpassed in seventeenth-century England, though most of the wits, from Hall and Overbury and Earle to Butler and Halifax, put their best work into the attempt. It remains a question whether he was surpassed by La Bruyère in France.

Joseph Hall, who had in 1597 produced his *Toothlesse Satyrs*, and in 1605 (in Latin) his strange satirical allegory of *Mundus Alter et Idem*, suffered to appear in 1608 his noteworthy *Characters of Vertues and Vices in Two Books*. Hall's "Characterisms," as he calls them, are directly modelled on Theophrastus; pithy and well-balanced, his phrasing gave the note to all his successors; but the tone of the work is too abstract, and the moralising and balancing of good qualities against bad is unnecessarily obtruded. Yet his *Characters* signal the vogue the full force of which was felt some six years later in *A Wife, now the Widow of Sir Thomas Overbury . . . whereunto are added many witty characters and conceited newes*.

Sir Thomas Overbury, born in Gloucestershire in 1581, took a bachelor's degree from Queen's College, Oxford, in 1598, entered the Middle Temple, and then travelled. He became the adviser and "governor" of the favourite Rochester, whom he had first met at Edinburgh, and perhaps subsequently abroad. His *Observations* upon the Netherlands were circulated in manuscript, and Overbury obtained a great reputation for his wit at court. *The Wife*, a didactic poem, written in 1613, was flattered by numerous imitations. The poem is stated to have been written to dissuade Rochester from marriage with such a woman as Lady Essex. The lady, at any rate, took umbrage at Overbury's secret influence over the Earl. She managed to get her enemy shut up in the Tower, where on September 15th, 1613, the unhappy man was poisoned. Appended to *The Wife*, as issued the second time in 1614, were a number of characters by Overbury and his friends. They rapidly grew in successive editions from

twenty-one to as many as eighty, of which ten only are true characters. The rest are concerned with such peculiarities as are developed by certain occupations or positions in life. These are curious as illustrating manners, of which Overbury was a quick observer. But for the delineation of character in the proper sense, Overbury and his court friends had no very great talent. They were concerned primarily with tricks of speech and behaviour rather than moral qualities. Their portraits are frequently neither typical, distinctive, nor humorous. They are rather lively, entertaining, and quaint. Overbury sacrifices humour to epigram, and perception of subtle differences to the demands of a pretty wit. What a satisfaction to find him laying aside his cleverness for once, and producing a sympathetic picture like that of *The Franklin*! And with this may be ranked *The Good Wife*, *The Worthy Commander*, and *The Milkmaid*. Breton's *The Goode and the Badde, or England's Selected Characters, describing the good and bad Worthies of this Age*, first appeared in 1616. Every tiny little pamphleteer now began to place "Characters" in large type in his shop-front. Two years elapsed, and the best of the bunch came from the pen of a young Oxford scholar, John Earle.

John Earle, a native of York, where his father was registrar of the Archbishop's Court, graduated from Christ Church in 1619, and became a probationer fellow of Merton in 1620. He was with Chillingworth and the other Oxford men who resorted to Falkland's house at Great Tew. During the troubles he went abroad, made a Latin version of the *Eikon Basilike*, another (which went under the grate) of the *Ecclesiastical Polity*, eventually became Bishop of Salisbury, and died in the Plague year at Oxford in the sixty-fifth of his age.

The first edition of the *Microcosmographie; or, A Peece of the World Discovered, in Essays and Characters*, appeared in 1628, containing fifty-four characters; twenty-three were added during 1629; one in the sixth edition, 1633. After 1629 it seems doubtful whether Earle concerned himself further about his "Characters." As far as he wrote from the results of his own observation, he succeeded in producing a series of lifelike and at the same time generic portraits adorned not by witty antitheses, but by genuine flashes of insight into human nature. There is no

methodical arrangement of the characters.¹ Among the best are *The College Butler*, *The Church Papist*, *The She Hypocrite*, *The Meer Gull Citizen*, *The Criticke*.

James I.'s fame as an author has undoubtedly suffered somewhat from his notoriety as a King. It may be admitted that he was a diffuse and pedantic writer; but though diffuse, there is often a pithy saying or an apt illustration to be gleaned from his furrow, and though pedantic he preferred to write in his native tongue, while he might have shone resplendent in Latin like his master, George Buchanan, or his persistent flatterer, Francis Bacon. He was naturally clever, had a tenacious memory, and a remarkable aptitude for classifying matters in his mind in accordance with the system then in vogue. James's juvenile production, *Essayes of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poetry* (1584), was probably written as themes for his tutors. The *Meditations on the Revelations* (1589) show his theological bent. *Demonologie* (1597), *Basilikon Doron* (1599), and *A Counter-blast to Tobacco* (1604) are his best known essays. He is most eloquent when he speaks of the divine hereditary right of kings, of the absolute truth of which strange tenet he seems to have had a sincere conviction. His prose works were collected in 1616. The *Basilikon Doron*, though teeming with quotations and references, is probably his most readable production, containing much good sense and shrewd worldly wisdom.

The one outstanding figure among the prose writers of the period—England's great coeval

of Shakespeare and Galileo—has now to be brought prominently upon the scene.

Francis Bacon, younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper, was born at York House, between West Strand and the Thames, on January 22nd, 1561; he was thus, as he courtierly observed, "just two years younger than Her Majesty's happy reign." His mother, Ann, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, was a woman of scholarly accomplishment and was the translator of Jewel's Latin *Apology* for the Church of England (1564); her sister Mildred was the wife of Lord Burghley. When Francis Bacon was born, his cousin Robert Cecil, afterwards Lord Salisbury, was eleven years old. Francis went in April, 1573, to Trinity College, Cambridge, where, with Whitgift for his tutor, he learned to question the authority of Aristotle. In the fall of 1576, after being admitted to Gray's Inn, he went to Paris in the suite of our ambassador, Sir Amyas Paulet, and in the interests of diplomacy invented some highly ingenious ciphers; he had to return to England on his father's death in 1579. Having been called to the Bar he sat in Parliament for Melcombe Regis (1584), and during the next winter drew up his somewhat Machiavellian treatise of *Advice to Queen Elizabeth*. In 1586 he became a bencher of his Inn, and now sat for Taunton in Parliament. When the Marprelate controversy was raging in 1589 he sought to arbitrate between parties in his *Controversies of the Church of England*. He disliked the bigoted narrowness of the Puritan, but was convinced that the Church needed

¹ They are kept within modest limits as regards length. In style they are somewhat monotonous owing to the rather mechanical ply of the sentences; but they are pellucid, free from far-fetched conceits, and uncomplicated as regards syntax. There are singularly few obsolete words, though, as in Bacon, words are often used in senses that have become uncommon or pedantic. At their best they exhibit the work of an observer, a philosopher, a humorist, and an artist. A French paraphrase appeared at Louvain in 1671.

Allied both to the character and didactic work of the period, may here be noticed the *Ten Precepts to his Son Robert*, written by Lord Burghley in Elizabeth's reign, though not published until 1637. In gnomic power—in weight of matter and depth of judgment—still more in worldly wisdom, these *Precepts* rival Bacon's *Essays*. They lack the wit and power of expression, but they have a homely force of their own that is impressive. The style, too, is clear, untrammelled by "conceited" imagery, wholly free from Italian phrasing and affectation, which the sound Aschamite and Protestant Burghley abhorred.

A place may here be found, too, for the "witty, grave, and sententious book" of Owen Feltham, of which the poet Randolph wrote:

"Thy book I read, and read it with delight,
Resolving so to live as thou do'st write."

The book so complimented was, of course, Feltham's *Resolves* of 1620 (or thereabout), a diligent, extra-didactic, but somewhat wishy-washy understudy of Bacon's *Essays*. They resemble, in more than one respect, especially in their somewhat specious smoothness and shallow veneer, the once popular eighteenth-century *Meditations* of Hervey. The prose style is for the period remarkably easy and fluent, the composition neat and accomplished; here and there may be detected an artistic finish and a proneness to literary equation and balance that suggest the manner of Hamerton's *Intellectual Life*. A modernised and "amended" edition of the *Resolves* was brought out by James Cumming in 1806.

some reform and much greater elasticity. In the meantime he was diligently preferring his suit with Burghley and Walsingham, but the "tired suitor" was unable to secure a post, though he was continually in debt and always in want of money. He hungered and pined after office, but he barred his own path by an independent speech in Parliament. Within two years he was craving restoration to royal favour, but in 1595 the Earl of Essex, his new patron, generously gave him an estate at Twickenham. In 1594, while he was still engaged in suing, Bacon jotted down the extraordinary collection of extracts, proverbs, and happy thoughts, often of a mean and cynical character, to which he gave the name of *Promus* (i.e. dispenser of formularies and elegances). The spirit of *Promus* animates the advice which Bacon gave to Essex, with a view to his more secure retention of his place as first favourite with the Queen. The same kind of cunning rather than the maturer wisdom of later instalments is apparent in the first edition of the *Essays* published in January, 1597; but the most deplorable manifestation of this same short-sighted sagacity is discerned in the part taken by Bacon in the proceedings against Essex. Probably in consenting to contribute to the destruction of his friend Bacon acted under considerable pressure. If he had refused the task assigned to him by the Crown, he would have had to give up all chance of the Queen's favour, and with it all hope of immediate promotion. Bacon was not the man to make such a sacrifice. He had a keen sense of the value of fortune, of the possibilities of a learned leisure, of the importance of his colossal plans for the benefit of the human race; on the other hand he had a very dull sense of the claims of honour and friendship; he preferred to be prosperous even at the cost of facilitating the ruin of a friend, for whom ruin in any case was ultimately inevitable.

The death of the Queen brought about a complete change in his prospects. His conduct to Essex was now viewed in a disparaging light, and although he was one of a large batch of legal knights, his first overtures to the new King appear to have been rebuffed. Yet Bacon was encouraged by the conviction that the new King with his learned hobbies, his comprehensive ideas, and his aversion from intolerance, was susceptible in a high degree to philosophical advice. Hence his brief discourse touching the

happy union between England and Scotland, and his treatise on the pacification and edification of the Church. In the latter he advocates drastic Church reform in the direction of elasticity of ceremonial and conciliation of the Puritan conformists. He wrote, evidently, in ignorance of the temper of the King, who peremptorily rejected his advice. Bacon, who knew not his own mind till he knew the King's, promptly acquiesced in James's conservative views to the extent of calling in the printed copies of his treatise. In the new Parliament of 1604 he was on surer ground, and he quickly assumed a prominent position of conciliation to the new sovereign, extolling the prerogative, supporting the Union, advocating a subsidy, and the maintenance of the King's right of pre-emption. He at once received a pension, and devoted his leisure, previous to the re-assembling of Parliament, in working at his masterly essay on *The Advancement of Learning*, published in 1605, which contains some of his finest writing and is described as the first great book in English prose of secular interest. It is the first also of a long line of books which have attempted to teach English readers "how to think of knowledge, to impress upon them all that knowledge might do in wise hands for the elevation and benefit of man; to warn them against the rocks and shallows of error and fallacy which beset the course of thought and inquiry, and to elevate the quest for truth and the acquisition of wisdom into the noblest aim and best assured hope of the human species."

In the summer of 1607 he became Solicitor-General and Clerk of the Star Chamber, a long-promised reversion for which he had waited nineteen years. The ardour of the pursuit for a position having abated, Bacon underwent a period of depression, as an antidote for which he addressed himself to philosophy, and settled a plan of his *Instauratio Magna*, or great renewal of learning, to which his treatise on *The Advancement of Learning* had been intended as but a portico, a preface or statement of general principles preliminary to the great work. In May, 1612, his cousin, Lord Salisbury, died, honours and preferments were now flying about, and Bacon was suing for promotion in accordance with the system which he elaborated in his note-books with a thoroughness befitting an inductive philosopher and with an obsequiousness appropriate to the "King's chessman." He lost no time



Francis Bacon

in suggesting to the King that he should be removed to business of state; but it was not until August, 1613, that he was substantially promoted to the post of Attorney-General. His progress to the woolsack was definitely assured in 1616, in which year he was appointed a Privy Councillor. Towards the close of the year he tendered a letter of advice to the rising star of the court, George Villiers, soon to become the Duke of Buckingham, and in March, 1617, he received the Great Seal with the title of Lord Keeper. Buckingham early showed his appreciation of Bacon's character by sending letters to him in favour of suitors who had cases pending in chancery. Their advancement went hand-in-hand, for in January, 1618, Buckingham was made a marquis, and Bacon Lord Chancellor, with the title of Baron Verulam. In October, 1620, was published all that was ever completed of his *Novum Organum* (or "Directions concerning the Interpretation of Nature"), and this date may be taken to mark the climax of his greatness. On January 27th, 1621, he was created Viscount St. Albans.

Bacon rather complimented himself on his suave manners and on his knowledge of people and Parliament, but he naturally excited the greatest hostility by the support he gave Buckingham and Mompesson in enforcing oppressive monopolies, and in his cold-blooded severity to the Attorney-General, Yelverton, who had incurred the spite of the favourite. In March, 1621, he was impeached for corruption, and, having admitted the truth of twenty-eight of the principal charges against him, he was sentenced to be fined £40,000, and to be imprisoned in the Tower during the King's pleasure. He was also disqualified from sitting in Parliament or holding any office in the State. Of deliberately perverting justice for money Bacon was guiltless; but he had admittedly taken money from suitors; he had connived at the extortions of his servants, and had allowed himself to be brow-beaten by the King's favourite in the administration of justice to an extent which must preclude us from pronouncing him incorrupt. His disgrace procured him for the remaining five years of his life a seclusion which, though involuntary, was none the less fruitful of work befitting a philosopher and a scholar. "Like precious odours, most fragrant when incensed or crushed," Bacon's virtues of patience, assiduity,

and good temper were brought out by his adversity.

Freed from imprisonment after a two days' sojourn in the Tower, Bacon pursued his philosophic studies with little interruption. The *De Augmentis* (a translation with large additions of *The Advancement of Learning*), the completed edition of the *Essays*, the *History of Henry VII.*, *The Advertisement* (dialogue-wise) *Touching an Holy War*, besides the *Sylva Sylvarum*, and some other fragments of the *Novum Organum*, all proceeded from his pen during his enforced retirement. He died on April 9th, 1626, owning an estate of £7,000, and debts amounting to upwards of £20,000. His bequests were superb in their munificence, but unhappily not one of them took effect.

No nation has been more willing to condone—or rather to shut its eyes upon—the moral blemishes or delinquencies of its great intellectuals than the English. To this rule, however, there are one or two conspicuous exceptions, notably Laurence Sterne and Francis Bacon. The flagrant indecency of Sterne has proved in the main too much for English decorum, while in the case of Bacon, his notorious sale of justice and his unmistakable prepossessions in favour of autocracy have weakened the resistance to the plain evidence of the facts. Resplendent as Bacon's intellectual endowment was, giving to everything he wrote a classical atmosphere of solidity and magnanimity, his deficiency in regard to character and conduct is beyond the pale of wholesome apology. His mind was a typical late product of the European Renaissance, which in its early phases had produced Macchiavelli. In Bacon's case, however, the remorseless utilitarianism of the Italian was complicated by the subtle and sophistical logic of Calvinism. Add to this the training he received as a boy amid the crooked tricks of policy and intrigue which infected the very atmosphere of the English court, and we shall get some idea of the factors that went to form his character. An opportunist so subtle that he could never make up his mind, Bacon's faith in such invaluable abstractions as truth and honour became fatally sophisticated. He wavered always between theory and practice, philosophy and politics, Latin and English, tyranny and oligarchy, philanthropy and self-advancement, religion and science. The higher he climbed the more independent he felt

himself of the mere ordinary conventional distinction between right and wrong. The mighty intellect of Francis Bacon had become the instrument of a calculating and cold-blooded egotist, but an egotist without either a rudder, a compass, or a definite course. With a clear vision of what might be done for mankind by a man of science, a wise statesman, an able and honest lawgiver, Bacon himself, with his superlative endowment, was neither a pioneer of discovery, a faithful pilot of the ship of state, nor even a just judge. His scheme for the advancement of learning was the noblest thing of his life, but he neglected it and failed to arrive at any clear notion as to how the things he thought desirable should be actually done. He said that knowledge was power, and aimed ostensibly above all at the advancement of learning; but actually he wasted his time in the pursuit of riches and titles, and in quest of new devices for trading upon the folly, the vanity, and the selfishness of man. Intellectually capable of almost anything, Bacon lacked that essential quality which in Shakespeare dominates other gifts, moral capacity. Few men have understood the faults of the human intellect better and few have comprehended defects in the moral nature worse. It is, nevertheless, this extraordinary quality of Bacon's nature which contributes more than anything to the differential value of his two almost priceless literary legacies, the *Essays* and the *History of Henry VII.*

The essay may be said virtually to be a new literary form of Montaigne's own invention. There is nothing exactly like it either in Latin or Greek. In classical literature Plutarch's *Morals*, Cicero's *Offices*, Pliny's *Epistles*, and Seneca's *Letters to Lucullus* are perhaps the nearest approach to the essay, but the resemblance is slight. Both Montaigne and Bacon use the word in its true sense as an essay or analysis of some subject of thought treated in a "dispersed" or desultory fashion. As assaying depends upon a close application of chemistry and mineralogy, so the essay owes its distinctive quality to a novel combination of philosophic and literary skill.

The famous *LVIII. Essayes* of Bacon that we know were a gradual growth. The first edition of 1597 comprised only ten essays; the second thirty-eight essays, of which twenty-eight were new in 1612; the third fifty-eight essays, of which twenty were new in 1625.

The composition, correction, and augmentation of the essays thus extended over a period of nearly thirty years. They were planted under Elizabeth, watered under James, and attained their final growth under Charles. During this long interval the thought with which they are enriched was being deposited in Bacon's mind. No other English aphorist, unless it be Emerson, approaches Bacon in conveying the impression of classic style combined with such concentration and energy of thought. It is just in this suggestion of fine old sap and venerable experience within a narrow compass that his work recalls that of the sages of the antique world. Bacon was a natural hoarder of thought and phrase, of pith and marrow. Of the mere flowers of speech he was sparing and economical. Each essay then is a cluster of detached thoughts, sentences, and maxims, forming a collection of happy epigrams, apothegms, and lucky citations grouped under approximate headings. There is no elaboration of style, and very little order. Thoughts are put down, and left unsupported, unproved, undeveloped. Their vitality is due in the main to their unusual combination of sagacity, wit, and terseness. Some of the most prosperous sayings in the language are packed into these secular sermons. Secondly it is due to the interesting duality of the man of letters and the man of the world, the idealist and the creature of shifts and expedients which is so deeply marked in this little great son of man.

No less supreme in the realm of history than the *Essays* in the sphere which they adorned, Bacon's *History of Henry VII.* simply towers above the other historical prose of this epoch. His greatness can be estimated when we compare the finished work with the raw material out of which it was fashioned—the chronicles, namely, of Fabyan, Polydore, Virgil, Hall, Holinshed, and Stow. Poor and incomplete though these materials were, Bacon succeeded so well that he has left later historians but little to do. Subsequent researches have but confirmed and illustrated the truth of his history in all its main features. The portrait of Henry as drawn by him is the original of all the portraits which have been drawn since. The good stories of the reign, such as those of Morton's form, Empson's fixed determination to "cut another chop" (£720) out of Alderman Sir William Capel, Henry's

rebuke to the Earl of Oxford, and Maximilian's method of marriage by proxy with Anne of Brittany, are all related by Bacon, and it is amusing to trace how certain of his statements have been borrowed, perverted, and often disfigured by subsequent historical compilers. As compared with the dull, soulless, and uncritical compiling of his predecessors and contemporaries, the effect of Bacon's treatment of his materials resembled the bringing of a light into a dark room.

The movement of the narrative as a whole is rapid, and the style is singularly clear and unencumbered. Classical turns of phrase and words used in a strict classical or etymological sense (now obsolete) are much rarer than in the *Essays*. Long imaginary speeches put in the mouth of the Chancellor and others occasionally betray Latin models such as Livy and Sallust. The episodes, especially those dealing with the adventures of the two Pre-

tenders, Simnel and Warbeck (the King was haunted with spirits by the magic and curious arts of the Lady Margaret), the establishment of the Star Chamber, Henry's intervention in the affairs of Britain (Brittany), and the wily diplomacy on both sides which surrounded this event, are introduced with an abundance of art. A ripple of humour, albeit saturnine, is more conspicuous than in any other of Bacon's works. Pithy and poignant sayings, as is the rule in his work, keenly stimulate the zest of the reader. But the reader's interest is primarily governed, as it should be, by the art with which Bacon gradually unfolds the character of his main figure, the monarch of whose nature his comprehension appears to be well-nigh perfect. Considered upon its own claims as an explanation of events by reference to the feelings and purposes of the chief actor, it is perhaps a better model than any history that has been published since.¹

¹ The magistral edition of Bacon's *Works* is that of Ellis and Spedding (7 vols., 1857); supplemented by *Letters and Life* (7 vols., 1862-74). From this somewhat cumbrous *Life* Carlyle borrowed the plan of his *Cromwell*. A first-rate edition in one volume of *The Philosophical Works* was issued by Routledge in 1905 (ed. J. M. Robertson). This contains *The Advancement of Learning*, the *Magna Instauratio*, *Novum Organum*, and *De Augmentis* (in English), *The New Atlantis*, *Essays*, *Apophthegms*, and *De Sapientia Veterum* (also in translation); also minor fragments, virtually all, in fact, except the *Henry VII*. The defects of Bacon's moral nature have perhaps been somewhat overstrained by Macaulay in his trenchant essay, by Dr. Abbott in his brilliant *Francis Bacon: An Account of His Life and Work* (1885), and to a less degree by Dean Church (1884) and Sidney Lee in *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century* (1904). A more lenient view is taken by Spedding, Prof. Nichol (1890), J. M. Robertson, and Dr. S. R. Gardiner. Macaulay's theory of Bacon's character, which is little more than an amplification of Pope's hackneyed paradox as to the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind, was subjected to a very destructive analysis by Spedding in *Evenings with a Reviewer*. Like Herbert Spencer, and like Pope, and to some extent like Coleridge or De Quincey, of course in very different ways, Bacon eludes our sympathy. His character is the more liable to be traduced. On the other hand, his position as a Pilot in matters of Science has been exaggerated. Of the great inventors and philosophers of his day, such as Harvey, Fabricius, Harriot, Kepler, Napier, Galileo, and Gilbert, he knew practically nothing. The discoverer of the circulation of the blood said of him that he wrote philosophy like a Lord Chancellor. Hallam said that he might have been the High Priest of Nature had he not been Lord Chancellor of James I. But he gave little evidence of this capacity. His famous method was an impossible one. Poets and literary critics have lauded it to the skies, but quite innocuously, for men of science have instinctively avoided it. Bacon thought that the secrets of Nature could be analysed and dissected like a great Cryptogram; and he thought quite genuinely that in his new *Organon* he had discovered the Clavis, for the use of the initiated. The great secret (the Inductive Method) was as old as Aristotle, or rather, very much older, since it implies that combined method of guessing and inference by which men have discovered almost everything that they know. It was well to deride dogma, deduction, convention, and other idols and obstructions to thought and progress. It was good to ponder on method, to argue for a better discipline in inference, and to plead for an open door to Inquiry in the widest possible sense. All this Bacon did memorably; but, when he came from the general to the particular, he paid the penalty of all who aspire to omniscience. In practical science he was far behind his own day. In prophetic vision of what Science might accomplish he is considerably ahead of 1906. We get an imaginative glimpse of this in his ultra-didactic and consequently somewhat grotesque but most attractively written *New Atlantis* (written about 1624-5, this popular fragment was published 1627). This wonderful island called the New Atlantis, lest we should confuse it with the great Atlantis (*i.e.* America), is situated, figuratively speaking, somewhere between More's Utopia and Swift's Laputa. The book forms a fitting epilogue to the Renaissance in England. In the counter-Renaissance that was impending Bacon would have been a strangely incongruous figure.

CHAPTER XI

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEOAN PROSE.—II

"O, eloquent, just, and mighty death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; whom none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*"—*History of the World.*

Raleigh—Stow—Holinshed—Speed—Camden—Knolles—Memoirs and Diaries—Manningham—Sir Symonds D'Ewes—Naunton—Moryson—Hakluyt—Elizabethan criticism—Gosson—Sidney's *Defense* and Jonson's *Timber*.

NO history of the sixteenth or early seventeenth century approaches in modern interest the remarkable work of Bacon.

But apart from this the right of place must be accorded to the famous work of Raleigh, the brilliance of whose achievement as a man of action has thrown a kind of rainbow over his portentous *History of the World*—intended in the first instance as a portico to his *History of England under the Great Queen*. Of the England of that period Raleigh himself was a kind of epitome—as typical of his generation as Sidney was of his; even more versatile, a striking representative of the restless spirit of romantic adventure, mixed with cool practical enterprise that marked the time. Popular hero as he became after his death, in the heyday of his career Raleigh was a most unpopular favourite. His whole character seemed composed of opposites. As pedantic as Lord Herbert about his pedigree and his training in arms, a finished courtier, reserved, magnificent, fearless, in talk incisive even when he spoke in broad Devon, in arts accomplished, by his wife and a few friends worshipped, by the majority of his contemporaries detested, Raleigh eclipsed them all, including Leicester, Sussex, Southampton, Hatton, and even Essex, in the romantic interest which his versatile career has

inspired. The region of the Exe and the Otter, so prolific in great seamen; Oriel College; the fields of France, where he served a campaign or two against the League; the Middle Temple and the English camps in the south of Ireland witnessed the training of this paragon among the courtiers of the English Renaissance. In his early days he was famous for his patronage of Bruno, the advanced Italian thinker who was in England in 1583 and again in 1585. He was no less celebrated for his extravagant dress, his hatbands being often composed, we are told, of the costliest pearls. He was equally noted for his avarice and for the rich monopolies he obtained from the Queen and from the sequestered estates of traitors. His wealth enabled him to build the superb vessel of 200 tons, as she was then deemed, the *Ark Raleigh*, the flagship of Admiral Howard in 1588, and to fit out the privateering and colonising expeditions which have given him a permanent place in English history. Fierce swashbuckler as he often appeared in his capacity of Captain of the Guard and rival of Essex for his royal mistress's favours, in the quiet study of Durham House overlooking the river Raleigh entertained and patronised with a rare urbanity some of the choicest spirits of the day, such as Spenser, Harriot, Hakluyt, Hooker, and Jonson.¹

¹ Raleigh's career as a man of action may be briefly summarised. In 1596 he was there when Essex singed the Spanish king's beard in Cadiz harbour. The year previous he had sailed to Guiana in search of the fabled "El Dorado," destroying on the way the Spanish town of San José, and on his return he published his *Discovery of the Empire of Guiana*. He took a director's part in the colonisation of Virginia, and introduced tobacco and potato plants into Europe. But in 1603 his career as courtier was blighted. Arrested for conspiring with the miserable Lord Cobham against the fox and his cubs (James I. and his children) he attempted suicide in the Tower. Coke, at his trial, set an example which Jeffreys hardly eclipsed, "thou"-ing the prisoner, calling him "viper" or "spider of hell." Condemned to die, Raleigh was under the shadow of

But we are concerned here with his writings in prose. Of these only three were published in his lifetime, *The Fight about the Isles of the Azores* (1590), *The Discovery of Guiana* (1596), and the *History of the World*. The *History* was written in the Tower, where, though Raleigh was comparatively well-treated and indulged in chemical experiments, the society of friends and other diversions, he necessarily had much time upon his hands, between 1607 and 1614. In large portions of the work he was greatly aided by learned friends. Thus Dr. Burhill assisted him in the interpretation of Hebrew; Harriot was his oracle on disputed questions of chronology or geography; John Hoskins, the arbiter of style, friend of Donne and Selden and informant of Aubrey, is said to have revised the whole work for press; Ben Jonson also read the work in manuscript and claimed to have written, with other sections, much of the narrative of the Second Punic War.

There is no doubt that the liveliest passages came direct from Raleigh's pen, such as the preface, the conjecture that the Garden of Eden and its rivers were rightly to be found in South America, the illustrative comments drawn from contemporary history, the digressions dealing with abstract questions of law, theology, philosophy and magic, or the ideal form of government, the elaborate portraits of historical personages—Epaminondas, Jezebel, Pyrrhus or Semiramis (a veiled portrait of the Great Queen of his own day), and finally the magnificent apostrophe to "eloquent, just and mighty Death," with which the *History* closes—all these are unmistakable Raleigh. The intervening chronicle portions are often extremely lifeless: much of this compilation

may well have been the work of erudite assistants under Sir Walter's supervision.

The first part of the contemplated *History* was alone published in the early part of 1614 (two impressions, a second edition followed in 1617), and this brought the work down no farther than 130 B.C., or roughly from chaos to Antiochus the Great. In two subsequent parts of which a few preparatory notes remain Raleigh had intended to bring his history down to 1603. The work involved was greatly encouraged by Raleigh's consistent advocate and hero-worshipper, the young Prince Henry, for whom the prisoner wrote a number of small educational treatises, and upon his death in 1612 the historian lost heart and interest in his colossal undertaking. It remains a signal monument to one of the most interesting and paradoxical figures of this difficult and perplexing era, and as one of the curiosities of rather than vital contributions to English Literature.

The remaining historians of the Elizabethan era, putting aside Bacon and Raleigh, can be treated in a very brief space. Fuller wrote humorously of the good purpose to which those honest tailors, John Stow and John Speed, had stitched away at English history for the benefit of future generations. Most of the historical compiling was done after this pattern. Raphael Holinshed had continued his *Chronicles of England* down to 1575, and his noteworthy folio had appeared in 1578 in ample time to prove of yeoman service to Marlowe, Greene, Shakespeare, and contemporary masters of the historic drama. Holinshed died shortly after the publication, but the work was edited with a supplement by John Hooker in 1586.¹

this sentence until 1618, when he was sacrificed (October 29th), in part as a propitiatory offering to Spain, after the inevitable failure of his forlorn raid in Guiana. From 1604, after the parody of justice witnessed at his trial (not that Raleigh was guiltless, but that the Crown lawyers were infamous), and since his solitary walks in the Tower were observed by huge crowds, who saw in him one of the last of the little band of heroes of the late reign who sailed beyond the sunset and bore the brunt of the duel with the might of Catholic Spain, Raleigh had become a popular hero. His angry temper, his headstrong arrogance, his overweening ambition, and his damnable pride (as Aubrey had it) were forgotten, and so the strange career of the poet, soldier, scholar, buccaneer, and spoiled courtier was concluded by the superposition of a martyr's crown and halo.

¹ One of the most graphic and entertaining narratives of the Elizabethan period is contained in Harrison's *Description of England*, a kind of topographical outwork to the *Chronicle* of Holinshed. It was written by William Harrison, Londoner and Oxonian (Christ Church), who died Windsor canon in 1593, *æt.* 59. The chronicle was a printer's hodge-podge, but Harrison's animated description of England changing before his eyes leavens the whole mass of uninspired annalising. In its ruder fashion it almost deserves comparison with Macaulay's famous third chapter, or the inspired tableau of France in the third chapter of the second volume of Michelet's *Histoire*. About the churches and their services, ministers and covetous patrons, he tells us much at first hand. Bells and times of prayer and much stained glass still remained. Images, shrines, rood-lofts, tabernacles, wakes, and bride-ales he gives as superstitions of the past (this in 1577). The "prophecyinges" were just beginning to come in. The English bishops, says he, were the most learned in Europe, though

Meanwhile in 1565 John Stow (d. 1605), originally a tailor, a friend and protégé of Archbishop Parker, and one of the antiquarian society founded by that great Churchman, had compiled from a larger basis of original authorities his *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (1565); this was followed by his more compendious *Chronicles of England* 1580, from which was developed the subsequent and better known *Annales of England* (1592, and subsequent editions), and finally in 1598 appeared his invaluable *Survey of London*, the basis of all modern London topography. The chief contemporary rival to the *Annales* of Stow was the well-digested *History of Great Britaine* (1611) by another wielder of the shears, the diligent John Speed (1552—1629) of Moorfields. The corresponding *Britannia* (1586) of the scholarly William Camden (1551—1623), head of Westminster School and Clarenceux King-at-Arms, was written in Latin and was not Englished by Holland until 1610, but his *Remains* and *Annals of Elizabeth*, written in 1605 and 1615 respectively, were written in English. Sir John Hayward (1564—1627), as became a somewhat larger experience of life, took a more political and less dry-as-dust view of the historical past in his *First Part of the Life and Raigne of Henry the IVth*, which he dedicated with much temerity in 1599 to the service of Essex. It very nearly cost him his head and Elizabeth herself expressed a desire that he should be racked; but he lived to enjoy the favour of James I., and to write his *Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth*, published in 1630, which Edmund Bolton holds up in his *Hypercritica* as a model for the future historian along with the histories of More, Raleigh, and Bacon. Richard Knolles (1550—1610) had the good luck to light upon an untrodden path

in a Latin *History of the Turks*, published at Frankfort in 1596. Like Watson with Spain he had Ottoman history practically to himself. Six or seven editions of his folio *Generall Historie of the Ottoman Turks* appeared within a century of its first appearance (1603), and "Old Knolles" was warmly eulogised by Dr. Johnson, Southey, Hallam, Kingsley, Lane-Poole, and, above all, Byron; but it is significant that no edition of the work has appeared since 1700.

We need not speak here of Spottiswoode on the Scots Church, of Heylyn on the Reformation, of Lord Herbert's *Henry VIII.*, or of Fuller's *Crusades* and other historical compilations. More characteristic really is the great amount of accumulative work done by such men as Parker, Twysden, Selden, Dugdale, Carew, Cotton, Coke, Spelman, Weever, Wyrley, Vincent, Brooke, Bodley, and others, most of whom are mentioned elsewhere. Antiquaries were beginning to be found to take thought for the tools and materials of future historians. Such were Ralph Agas (d. 1621) and Speed, the great map-makers; William Watts, chaplain to Rupert, who in 1640 edited the *Historia* of Matthew Paris; the grave and courtly Thomas Bedingfield, who translated the *Florentine History* of Macchiavelli in 1595; Sir Henry Savile, translator of the *Histories* of Tacitus (1591); or Sir Symonds D'Ewes (1602—1650), author of the *Journals of all the Parliaments during the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, who lived to undergo the indignity of being expelled by Colonel Pride in 1648. The literary value is not great, but the historical value almost priceless.¹

A sub-species of the chronicle out of the full-dress biography is the memoir, and it is characteristic of the last twenty-five years of the sixteenth century, which saw so many

in gluttony they fell short of their predecessors. Oxford and Cambridge are equal in greatness, so that it is impossible to discriminate between them. He bemoans the high prices, ever rising in spite of England's increased traffic. Wheat bread is a luxury for the rich. The beer, however, is better, or at any rate stronger, than of old. Men took two meals a day only—dinner and supper—and each class had its own hour for dining. In matters of attire he found his countrymen so mutable that, except it were a dog in a doublet, you shall not see any so disguised—women have become men and men transformed into monsters. In the manner of building and furnishing houses, he notes three important changes in his time—chimneys, bedding, and plate (to which add glass windows) had all been multiplied to admiration. But with these refinements he laments rise of rents and growth of usury. Then, as now, work was scamped, horsedealers were often rogues, Roman coins were dug up, English ships were famous, vagabonds, Egyptians, harlots, and scolds were incorrigible, the fox and badger were preserved by gentry for sport. Beavers lingered on the Tavy (?). English brawn was deemed the rarest treat in foreign parts. An odd story is told of certain Jews in Spain being inveigled into eating it on the supposition that it was fish.

¹ Closely akin to this may be noticed *The History of the Parliaments of England* (1640-43) by the versatile and not oppressively truthful or honest Thomas May of Mayfield (1595—1650), secretary and apologist of the Long Parliament, translator of Lucan, author of tragedies, verse-chronicles, and *The Ileir*, a comedy, 1622.

experiments both in life and in literature, that it should witness the rude commencements of this delightful art of memoir-writing in the modern sense. "Memoir," of course, is a very elastic term, including autobiographical diary (Pepys), diurnal of occurrences (Luttrell), and a worked-up chronicle of contemporary events (Walpole). The best specimens¹ contain all three elements, as in St. Simon; and in Elizabethan time we already can recognise specimens of each species. In the first class we have Forman, Manningham, Dee, Wilbraham, and Yonge; in the second D'Ewes, Henslowe, Camden, and Bodley; in the third Melville, Bannatyne, Spottiswoode, Baillie, Moysie, the Scots annalists, to whom we might perhaps add Carey and Winwood. Most of them are somewhat rudimentary as regards development: the more self-conscious forms, such as the literary memoir and the confession, are practically absent. They are nevertheless of much interest both from their intrinsic value and from the literary influence of a much-needed kind which they must have exercised upon narrative prose.

A very typical diary in which records of a few salient historical events are diversified by multitudes of notices of persons of social distinction with personal details, portents and records of sermons in the summarising of which nearly all the diarists of the period show an abnormal skilfulness is the diary of John Manningham, a gentleman of Brabourne, Kent, and of the Middle Temple, who discussed Queen Elizabeth's illness with her physician Dr. Parry, collected much gossip in the Temple Hall, recorded his visit to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in 1602, and died some twenty years later. His closely written and compact diary, after lying obscurely in the Harleian Collection for over two hundred years, was detected by the keen eye of Mr. Collier as containing a Shakespeare reference in 1831, and thirty-seven years later was transcribed and edited by Mr. Bruce. Apart from the frequent allusions to legal luminaries there are many other interesting anecdotes

and personalia in these long-forgotten pages. The unfortunate Overbury comes before us several times, such as we should have expected to find him, inconsiderate and impetuous. Ben Jonson flits across the page. Of Marston there is a disagreeable anecdote which has not been left unnoticed by poetical antiquaries. Sir Thomas Bodley and Lord Deputy Mountjoy are alluded to. There is an excellent account of an interview with old Stow the antiquary, a valuable glimpse of the Cromwell family during the boyhood of the Protector, and references, some of them of importance, to Sir Walter Raleigh, to his foolish friend Lord Cobham, to the wizard Earl of Northumberland, and, of course, many allusions to the Cecils, both to Sir William and to the youngest son, to whom, according to the joke which is here preserved, his father's wisdom descended as if it had been held by the tenure of Borough-English. Some of Manningham's descriptions of the preachers whom he patronised are most realistic. "At Paules," he wrote in 1602, "one preached with a long browne beard, a hanging look, a gloating eye, and a tossing learing gesture. In the afternoon at Foster Lane, one Clappam, a 'blacke' fellow with a sour look, but a good spirit, bold and sometimes bluntly witty, and he preached about Rahab"—a queer text and queer sermon.

Sir Roger Wilbraham of the old Cheshire family, Master of Requests to Queen Elizabeth, died in 1616. He was at Gray's Inn with Bacon, and was knighted at the same time as Sir Julius Cæsar by James I., at Greenwich, soon after his arrival in London. A lawyer, and a man of affairs, who sat in Parliament under James I., and had official and judicial experience in Ireland, Wilbraham's comments are not those of the man in the street, but are judicious and carefully weighed. His abstracts of speeches in Parliament are full of interest, and confirm the subserviency of tone adopted towards Elizabeth to the very close of her reign. His account of her and of James's accession and his attempt to compare their

¹ Of the minor diarists, Sir Thomas Bodley (1545–1613) is brief and somewhat formal. Henslowe's is a professional diary and play note-book by the notorious dramatic manager; Alexander Daniel's from 1617 onwards is genealogical, chronological, and local in character; Dee's is a learned professional diurnal with quaint memorabilia of his life; Sir Thomas Hoby's, which closes early in 1654, is largely composed of travel notes; the Scottish memoirs are very valuable historically, especially in ecclesiastical matters (incorporated wholesale by Calderwood and later historians). Books of engraved portraits with short Lives were furnished by Henry, the bookseller son of Philemon Holland.

characters show that he had some literary ambition in inditing his journal.

John Rous, a respectable clergyman, from Emmanuel, Cambridge, a native of Hesselton in Suffolk, appointed minister in James I.'s reign of Weeting and Santon Downham, began diarising before 1612, but most of his original drafts are lost. From his loophole in the country he observed and recorded and collected materials in a small way. He was no partisan, a fair scholar, hostile to the Duke of Buckingham and to all papists, but generally inclined to be tolerant (see a lively account by him of Buckingham's assassination, and some rather gruesome details of William Utting the toad-eater). Another diarist of the same class is Walter Yonge. He commenced his Diary very soon after Elizabeth's death; it was found quite by accident at Taunton among a lot of old books; came into possession of George Roberts, the Lyme Regis antiquary, and was edited by him in 1848. It is a good specimen of the common sense and wide information possessed by a West Country Puritan justice of the peace in the south of Devon under James I. The diaries of Rous and Yonge are comparatively of humble and local interest; but they show the kind of simultaneous instinct by which educated people in every grade began recording events in a more or less systematic way about this time, with a kind of half-suppressed consciousness that they were living upon a great stage in which events momentous in their interest to posterity might occur at any time.

One of the most interesting and typical in many respects of the personal narratives of the period is the Latin *Autobiography* of Father John Gerard. A much-persecuted Jesuit, he managed to escape from England about 1606 and then set to work and wrote a detailed account of the Gunpowder Plot—an account exculpatory of the Catholics as a whole, and specially designed to exonerate and indeed to beatify Father Garnet—Saint Garnet as Yonge indignantly declares that the papists call him. About three years after this he wrote his very interesting *Autobiography*. We have an extraordinary picture of the fanaticism—if that be the proper word—of this devoted man, playing hide-and-seek with the priest-baiters such as Topcliffe and Anthony Munday, the Balladino of *The Case is Altered*, feeling the gaoler who put his fetters on, but

refusing to give him anything for taking them off, shuffling about in these fetters in his narrow cell until the rust wore off and they became as bright as polished steel, and jangling them noisily so that they might drown the sound of Geneva psalms going on beneath him.

Robert Carey's account of the circumstances of Elizabeth's death will always possess interest. He was a grandson of Mary Boleyn, the Queen's aunt; he was always rather a favourite, and when he went to see the Queen at Richmond in March, 1603, he was promptly admitted and found her sitting low upon her cushions; in anticipation of her death he made his arrangements, and in spite of the watchfulness of the guards he managed to escape from the closed palace and to reach Holyrood, in spite of a bad kick from his horse, upon the third day. For the moment he obtained his reward—a post about the King; but reflection upon the indecency of his haste led James eventually to revoke his appointment!

The *Autobiography* of Sir Symonds D'Ewes is a distinct and very interesting type, linking the personal autobiography proper with the diurnal of occurrences, for it is in its inception an autobiography based upon a diary. The diary begins to expand into some fulness at the time of Overbury's murder in 1616. D'Ewes was only about fourteen at the time, but he was a most precocious youth, and was, in fact, a born memoir-writer, like Horace Walpole—observant, close, censorious, narrow, indefatigable with his pen, very jealous and sensitive to the lightest offence, timid, and devoid of masculine tastes. D'Ewes was in many ways a type of the white-blooded Laodicean and rather feline diarist. He has perhaps been unduly attacked by Wood, Hearne, and other stalwart Tories, but he was certainly far from being a genial character.

With D'Ewes we are among the diurnalists—recorders and commentators from day to day like Narcissus Luttrell, Madame D'Arblay, Mrs. Delany, and Greville. And even in Jacobean times we have the quidnuncs Sir Dudley Carleton (1573—1632), John Chamberlain (1553—1627), George Carew, Baron Carew, and Sir James Melville. And their letters, like those of Horry Walpole, are really memoirs under a very thin disguise, exhibiting the same extraordinary facility and diverting flow of casual everyday narratives.

Carleton's style is exceptionally clear and fluent; few writers have surpassed him in making his meaning obvious without effort and without unnecessary verbiage. And of all his correspondents the most kindred spirit is John Chamberlain, of Trinity College, Cambridge. Both were university men who had travelled widely, and Carleton especially had a keen insight into all the intricacies and delicacies of diplomatic life. Both were eclectics, humorists in a quiet way, connoisseurs, and gossips.

Sir Robert Naunton (1563—1635) was an inveterate old courtier of the Tudor régime, who warily and stealthily made his way to the secretaryship mainly by the sufferance of Buckingham. From that point of view, in a few intervals of leisure, he made notes upon the characters of his contemporaries and predecessors in office. These he worked up in Charles's reign into his *Fragmenta Regalia*, which is interesting as a link between characters and memoirs proper, and also as foreshadowing the elaborate characters which later artists such as Clarendon, Burnet, Hervey, and Hume worked into their histories or memoirs.

A short interval only separates the historical from the geographical gossips—the travellers such as Coryat, Fynes Moryson, William Lithgow, and Sir George Sandys, who wrote such monumental narratives of their wanderings from city to city and from land to land.

Fynes Moryson (1566—1630), a Lincolnshire and Peterhouse man, obtained licence to travel in 1590, and his portentous *Itinerary*, dealing partly with his journeys in central and southern Europe, partly with the art of travel generally, was put forth in 1617 (a fourth part remained in MS. until 1903). More amusing, though scarcely less voluminous, are the travels of Thomas Coryat (1577—1617), an unofficial court jester who concealed a passion for travel under his motley, and set out on a wonderful tour from his native Odcombe in Somerset in 1608. His *Coryat's Crudities Hastily Gobled Up*, as his itinerary was grotesquely called, appeared in folio in 1611. The more academic but hardly less entertaining *Travel Relation* of George Sandys, who journeyed in Egypt and the Holy Land, appeared in 1615, and William Lithgow's *Rare Adventures and Painfull Peregrinations* in 1632. William Parry's *Discourse of the Travels of Anthony Sherley* appeared in 1601. Captain John Smith, of Virginia, wrote a famous but partly apocryphal narrative of

his European travels, *True Travels* (1630). The travels of Sir Thomas Overbury, Sir Robert Dallington, Sir Thomas Herbert, and John Evelyn are all the work of highly scholarly and observant men, but have less individuality and more of the impersonal and diplomatic character than the preceding. Heylyn, Corbet, and Brathwaite are noticed elsewhere.

For the logs and yarns of the sea-farers as opposed to the land-faring journals of the epoch we are indebted almost exclusively to Richard Hakluyt (1552—1616), who from the time that he was a boy at Westminster discovered a positive passion for cosmography and voyagers' narratives. These as time went on, and he became a well-beneficed dignitary of the Church, and a facile discharger of archidiaconal functions, he collected into his well-known *Principal Navigations, Voyages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589, enlarged 1598-1600). Most of the greatest captains of the day upon whose lips Hakluyt had hung entranced are represented in this monster collection, which is of the utmost interest in the history of commerce, shipping, travel, colonisation, and philology, the narrative, which is frequently the compiler's own, being constantly heightened by the air of adventure and glamour of the period, while here and there are to be found splendid reaches of English prose. A successor and continuator of Hakluyt, though of somewhat inferior calibre, was found in Samuel Purchas (1577—1626), whose *Pilgrimes* came out in four volumes in 1625. Finally, before quitting topography we must just name those eminent pioneers of England's noble series of County Histories, John Norden's *Speculum Britanniae* and Erdeswicke's *Survey of Staffordshire*, commenced 1593, Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent*, Stow's *Survey* of 1598, Carew's *Survey of Cornwall*, 1602.

The writings of the Elizabethan critics are primarily apologies for Poets and Poetry against the onslaught of Precisians and Puritans. By writers such as John Northbrooke (*Treatise wherein Dicing, Dawncing, Vaine Playes, etc., are Reproved*, 1577), Stephen Gosson (*The Schoole of Abuse . . . a Plesaunt Invecitive against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, etc.*, 1579, and *Playes Confuted*, 1582), Philip Stubbes (*The Anatomie of Abuses*, 1583), George Whetstone (*A Touchstone for the Time*, 1584), William Rankins (*Mirroure of Monsters*, 1587), Dr.

Rainolds (*Overthrow of Stage Players*, 1599), and others, the early Christian tradition of the iniquity of plays, songs, and merry tales was wrested with little regard to the context from Augustine, Tertullian, Cyprian, Lactantius, and Chrysostom, and hurled at the exponents of *belles lettres* collectively, and without any attempt to discriminate between poets and balladmongers. They attacked the vices of the playhouse, and the dangers of foreign influence through literature. Against these "poet-whippers," as Sidney called them, there sprang up a school of vigorous protest headed by Thomas Lodge, Sidney himself, Sir John Harington, Daniel, and Heywood. They defend poetry both on historical and on abstract grounds. Poetry they held was universal in its antiquity. All great nations had practised it, and all great princes patronised it. Poetry was of divine origin, moral and artistic in its aim, summarised by Webbe as "to mingle delight with profit in such wise that a reader might by his reading be partaker of both." To the time-honoured objections that poets were liars and wantons and their readers fools for their pains they furnish answers equally old and equally hackneyed.

From these beginnings the critics go on to discuss more purely literary problems such as the classification of literary types or genres, the necessity of studying classical models, the need of symmetry and restraint, of bringing order into the chaos of English prosody, of refining the vernacular diction threatened by the present influx of new words and new forms. Here again were sides of controversy, Gabriel Harvey, Wilson, Puttenham, Webbe, Thomas Drant, Thomas Campion (and even if we do not include Sidney), most of the familiar names being strongly in favour of a classical programme and a classical or quantitative prosody, their object being, in Harvey's words, "to pull down rhyming and set up versifying" after Latin models; the champions of the other, and as it proved the winning, side were far less noted personages.

One of these was Richard Mulcaster, noted in his day as a schoolmaster, who wrote in 1581 in his book on *Training up Children*, "I love Rome, but London better; I favour Italy, but England more; I honour the Latin, but worship the English." Another was Sir Richard Carew, the Cornish antiquary and translator of Tasso, who penned in 1596 his

Excellency of the English Tongue, and finally there was Samuel Daniel, the poet, who in his *Defense of Rhyme* of 1602 gave the *coup de grâce* to the academic theory that English verse ought to be built upon classical lines. The books of lasting value and interest which emerged from these early debates upon the first principles of the literary art were two in number, Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* (or, as a rival printer had it, *Defense of Poesie*), 1595, and Jonson's oddly named *Timber, or Discoveries*, first printed in 1641. Sidney's theory of poetry (classification of genres, and vindication of the superiority of poetry over its two chief rivals, history and philosophy) may be termed an epitome of the criticism of the Italian Renaissance. Sidney expected his correspondents to inform him as to the latest Italian books and theories, and in his own treatise he drew considerably upon the theories of Minturno, Trissino, and Castelvetro, and also from Scaliger's poetics. By these writers he controlled his views on such knotty questions as the dramatic unities, and the various canons of Aristotle, the different classes of prose and verse, and most of the technical points.

But the most interesting portion of his defence by far is the more original section in which he discusses the contemporary state of poetry in England. Why, he inquires, is England, the mother of excellent minds, such a hard stepmother to poets? He admits greatness to Chaucer, and poetical beauties to *The Mirrour for Magistrates*, to Surrey, and to *The Shepheards Calender*, but he deplores the defects of the English drama, its fondness for farce and neglect of the unities; while he strongly deprecates the tendency to affectations, euphuistic and other. This state of things, he concludes, should not be; England ought to be the reverse of sterile in regard to poetry, for the English language is specially favourable to poets. Our language is equal to all demands upon it, its composite nature, its facile grammar, its richness in compound words, are so many advantages, contributing to various and melodious expression. Finally, for the purposes of modern versifications, the English language is especially adapted. "Fie, then, on the Englishman who scorns the sacred mysteries of poetry! On all such earth-creeping minds," says Sidney, in his humorous peroration, "I ought to invoke some terrible curse such as

that you be rhymed to death; I will not do that, but thus much curse I must send you in the behalf of all poets—that while you live, you live in love and never get favour for lacking skill of a sonnet; and when you die your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph."

Ben Jonson's notebook with its pedantic title of *Timber* (1641) is a somewhat promiscuous thicket of artistic and moral epigrams, raw material of thought for his *Works*, showing what a marvellous sponge he was of ideas and notions from ancient and modern literature. He invades other authors like a monarch and holds most of the writers of antiquity in solution in his spacious memory. The craze for Latinising English poetry was fairly laid to rest by this time; in other respects Jonson was usually a strong classicist, but there is a substratum of sanity, moderation, and native good sense about his opinions which separates him by a wide gulf from pedants such as Drant, Harvey, and Webbe. He respects the Italian

authorities as Dryden revered Boileau, but he loves good English. "Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary." "Custom is the mistress of language." "The chief virtue of style is perspicuity." "Writings need sunshine." Elsewhere, as champion of the poetic office, Jonson left a noble expression of an exalted ideal, when he wrote of Poesie;

Attired in the majesty of art,
Set high in spirit with the precious taste
Of sweet philosophy. . . .
O then, how proud a presence does she bear!
Then is she like herself; fit to be seen
Of none but grave and consecrated eyes.

By the time he wrote *Timber* critics had begun to feel it superfluous to argue about the general tendencies of poetry. Taking all that for granted they began to study no longer the allegory but the art which underlies all creative work in literature. Jonson thus represents the maturity and the sophistication of a period now drawing to its close.¹

¹ Of Raleigh there are Lives by Oldys (1736), Cayley, Tytler, Kingsley, Edwards (1868), Stebbing, Martin Hume, Taylor, and Rennell Rodd (1904). See also *Dict. Nat. Biog.* and Gardiner's *History*; the complete *Works* at Oxford, 1829; *A Bibliography of Raleigh*, by W. Eames, 1886. For much fuller detail as to biographers, travellers, and critics, see Seccombe and Allen's *Age of Shakespeare*, ed. 1904, Book II. For the critical writers, Haslewood's *Ancient Critical Essays* (1811-15) and G. Gregory Smith's *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (1904) should be consulted. There are good editions of Sidney's *Apologie* and Jonson's *Timber* by Cook and Schelling. On Coryat, Peacham, Overbury and some minor prose writers of the period A. W. Fox's *Book of Bachelors* may be perused with profit.

The period closed light-heartedly enough with the licentious comedy of Fletcher and with copious imitation of Melic and Anacreontic strains—the last imitation of antiquity until antique form again crops up in the Pindarics of Cowley and the Heroic Drama of Dryden. The Italian and Renaissance temper of the statesmen who had safeguarded England through the Reformation movement was none the less surely working itself out. England was now, by a strange admixture of introspection and scripture, to seek to justify the religion which its rulers had provided for it. Radical politics and biblical religion submerged the pagan and foreign, yet at the same time nationalist literary impulse, which had set in with Sidney, culminated in Shakespeare, and was disguised almost out of recognition in Milton. The serious development of our Letters had undoubtedly been deflected from its natural course by the brilliant success of the composite drama, by the undue amount of subserviency to foreign models, and by the surfeit of words for music. Narrative prose and verse, upon which it would have been natural for a later generation to build, was comparatively undeveloped. Dazzling as Elizabethan literature is, it was in some respects strangely defective. It resembles a faerie structure built upon a narrow rock. Of foundations in the ordinary sense it possessed none. And yet, if its sphere was to be enlarged, these foundations would have, sooner or later, to be constructed. This eventually proved the task of the period from 1660 to 1780. The postponement was due to no literary dearth in the period upon which we are now entering. It was, indeed, prolific in great writers, and promised to be germinal in the highest degree. But forces more urgent than Literature were driving men to introspection and religion. A complicated and rather rapid social change, which set in about 1603, began to divert them from the drama, the very success of which had exhausted its native vitality. Literature had, in brief, to go through the straits of Puritanism. The cross conflict between Renaissance and Reformation entered upon an entirely new phase. Stress was thrown upon actual rather than upon reflected life. Bunyan, Baxter, and Clarendon became typical figures. The more intense and individualistic note which had begun to sound so interestingly in Donne and Crashaw, and Browne and Herbert, was dammed up and flowed underground for upwards of a century. But the literary study of this transition period is still in its infancy, and all such generalisations must be suspect on the score of unripeness.

BOOK III
THE COUNTER-RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER I

FOUR GREAT PROSE WRITERS

"Fuller's language! Grant me patience, Heaven! A tithe of his beauties would be sold cheap for a whole library of our classical writers . . . and antiquarians. . . . The venerable rust and dust of the whole concern are not worth an ounce of Fuller's earth! . . . God bless thee, dear old man! may I meet with thee! which is tantamount to—may I go to Heaven!"—COLERIDGE, *Notes on English Divines*, etc.

"To me, every hour of the light and dark is a miracle,
Every inch of space is a miracle,
Every spear of grass—the frames, limbs, organs of men and women and all that concerns them,
All these to me are unspeakably perfect miracles."—*Motto for Browne from WHITMAN.*

Robert Burton—Thomas Fuller—Sir Thomas Browne—Jeremy Taylor.

ROBERT BURTON, the son of Ralph Burton, born at Lindley, in Leicestershire, on February 8th, 1577, passed from Nuneaton School to Oxford, becoming in 1599 a student at Christ Church, where for form's sake, "though he wanted not a tutor," he was placed under the tuition of Dr. John Bancroft, afterwards Bishop of Oxford. Residing at Christ Church, he drew the revenues of two livings (one in Oxford, to the parishioners of which, Wood tells us, he always gave the Sacrament in wafers), and in his famous "studie" at the "House" he died on January 25th, 1640, in the year of his grand climacteric. He lies in the north aisle of the cathedral at Oxford, and his resting-place is commemorated by a coloured bust, similar in design to the Shakespeare bust at Stratford and the Hooker bust at Bishopshbourne, bearing the famous epitaph: "Paucis notus, Paucioribus Ignotus, Hic Jacet Democritus Junior, Cui vitam dedit et mortem Melancholia." He seems to have led a secluded and uneventful life as a scholar, seeking an easily found relaxation in merry tales and buffooneries. He wrote a fairly juvenile Latin play called *Philosophaster*, begun in 1606 (that

is, four years before *The Alchemist*), and acted at Christ Church in 1617 (first printed 1862), dealing with the exposure of a nest of charlatans in a theme familiar to Ben Jonson. In 1621 appeared the first edition of his great work, *The Anatomy of Melancholy, What It is*, in quarto, by Democritus Junior.¹ For the general conception and form of the work Burton owes not a little, it may be supposed, to the "humorists" of a precedent generation, and to such books in particular as Thomas Walkington's *Optick Glass of Humours* (1607), Rowlands's *Democritus, or Dr. Merryman his Medicines against Melancholy Humours* (1607), and several of Dekker's tracts. Burton himself was mined regularly until Anne's reign, when the workings were abandoned, to be rediscovered by Sterne. With the third edition of 1628, which was the second published in folio, appeared Le Blanc's remarkable frontispiece, preceded by a curious description of its contents in homely verse—verse analogous to the doggerel of the translations which adorn the text. After the dedication to Lord Berkeley come some Latin elegiacs of little interest, and some English verses called the author's "Abstract of

¹ The Rylands Library at Manchester has a fine copy of the first edition "At Oxford, 1621," distinguished by the fact that the conclusion "To the Reader" is dated "from my study in Ch. Ch., Oxon, December 5th, 1620," and signed Robert Burton. It also contains the following characteristic manuscript note by George Steevens: "During a pedantic age like that in which Burton's production appeared, it must have been eminently serviceable to writers of many descriptions. Hence the unlearned might furnish themselves with appropriate scraps of Greek and Latin, whilst men of letters would find their inquiries shortened by knowing where they might look for what both ancients and moderns had advanced on the subject of human passions. I confess my inability to point out any other English author who has so largely dealt in apt and original quotations."

Melancholy," of more than a little interest, for it seems practically certain that Milton had their theme in his mind and their refrain ringing in his ears when he drafted his *Penseroso*. These verses are followed by the long expository introduction, entitled "Democritus Junior to the Reader," which forms one of the most interesting and masterly portions of the book.

One of the most obvious and perhaps superficial remarks to make on the book is that it is typical of its age—that of the scholarly cento—the cento, or as Camden puts it, the "patch-work quilt" of innumerable scraps of polyglot learning, and the age that of scholars like Prynne and Cudworth, Casaubon, Keckermann, and Isaac Vossius—men of an abnormal leathery physique, who sat over their desks till their eyes grew dim, whose deliberate ideal was apparently to read and abstract and summarise practically every book that had ever been written. Swift and Bolingbroke, with Pope and Arbuthnot, at the beginning of the eighteenth century managed between them to laugh such a *modus operandi* out of court as the extremity of pedantic absurdity, and we have both gained and lost by the success of their *jeux d'esprit*. Smollett, jeering in his eighteenth-century fashion at the survival of the ancient scholastic diligence in Germany, said that the German genius lay more in the back than in the brain. But the English scholar of Burton's day seemed to possess both back and brain.

For brain power of no ordinary kind is surely evinced in this scheme, partial though it be, of the philosophy of human life. One out of sympathy with Burton's mood may perhaps be tempted to say that a Burton might be cut out of a mind like Bacon's without much being missed. Yet Burton is much beside a scholar. If *The Anatomy* be regarded as the mere outpouring of commonplace books, with a pretext merely of unity in purpose and subject, then, maybe, it is no great thing. To be understood it must be regarded at once as the exhibition of a temperament and the discussion of a case. The case is that of the seamy side of human life and its perils. The author deliberately takes up his position of detached yet watchful isolation, in order to observe and to illustrate the human comedy: and he exhibits a new

variety of vanities, combining in one book, as it were, the knowledge of Solomon and his reflections upon the futility of things known and the knowing of them. "There is nothing true, and if there is we don't know it," said Democritus; and also, "we know nothing, not even if there is anything to know." We certainly know little of Democritus, save that he was a little wearish (withered) old man, very melancholy by nature, averse from company, and given to solitariness. Burton modestly disclaimed any intention of comparing himself with the sage of Abdera, but urged that he, too, had led a silent, solitary, and sedentary life. In philosophical calibre he may have been, and probably was, inferior to the author of *Peri Euthumias*: yet Burton represents admirably well the amused tolerance of the laughing philosopher, his nihilism and his scepticism as to the possibility of attaining anything like content or happiness. "Man never is, but always to be blessed."

A curious mixture was Burton—a Christian, a Protestant, and superstitious as Montaigne, as may be gathered from his digression on devils. From a profound theologian and learned microscopist of Melancholy, a waggon-load of sermons or a huge Latin tractate might have been expected. Burton gives his reasons against both, and we have what we have—a composition as heterogeneous as any English novel and containing almost every possible content except a regular intrigue or love plot. Yet we have an enormous section on Love Melancholy, in which in his own words Burton does not omit to "call a spade a spade." Thinking aloud in a slow, rumbling manner over the emptiness of life and the vanity of learning, he seeks and finds the same relief that Montaigne, Browne, and Charles Lamb found in a large measure of self-portraiture, and his erudite pessimism is at least as entertaining as Schopenhauer. His fellow collegians discerned in him a merry, facete, and juvenile old man, while his bookseller made a fortune out of his book. In lust of words and fondness for catalogues of them, he is a true fellow of Jonson, Marlowe, Rabelais, and Urquhart. Beneath all we may discover¹ peeping out pretty often the grave waggery of a man scanning human

¹ For Burton's life the authorities are Wood's famous *Athenæ Oxonienses* and the *Reliquiæ* of Thomas Hearne. The best edition is Shilleto's, with A. H. Bullen's introduction (3 vols., 1893).* See also Ferriar's *Illustrations of Sterne*; Lamb's *Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading*; Blackwood, Sept. 1861; A. W. Fox's *Book of Bachelors* (1899); and Charles Whibley's essay in *Literary Portraits* (1904).

nature for foibles, and thereby keeping himself on the windy side of care.

Of the prose writers whom we are now considering Fuller had most native wit, and did the most to naturalise common sense in English everyday writing. In one respect he was the forerunner of Samuel Johnson, in the other of William Cobbett. Born at Aldwinkle, where his father was rector, in 1608, Thomas Fuller was proud to call himself a Northamptonshire and Cambridge (Queens' and Sidney Sussex) man. He took orders in 1630, and one of his first duties was to "bury" Hobson, the famous Cambridge carrier. Fuller's uncle, Bishop Davenant of Salisbury, gave him a prebend and a rectory at Broad Windsor, Dorset. There he married, and in 1639-40 brought out his *Historie of the Holie Warre*, an entertaining account of the Crusades in five books, rich in good stories and unlooked-for allusions and digressions. In 1642 he brought out his best and most popular work, the *Holy and Profane State*, a series of character-sketches and essays, with many concrete examples—of a good wife, Monica; of a good college head, Dr. Metcalf; of a good herald, Camden; of a wise statesman, Burghley; of a good general, Gustavus Adolphus; of a good prince, Charles I.; of a witch, Joan of Arc; of a tyrant, Alva. Fuller obtained a chaplaincy in the Royalist army, and while rambling through the country collected materials for his *Worthies of England*. He would sit, it is said, patiently for hours listening to the prattle of old women in order to obtain snatches of local history or time-honoured tradition. In 1648 he obtained a curacy at Waltham Abbey, and while there wrote his buoyant *Pisgah Sight of Palestine* (1650), the topography of which was taken *in toto* from Bochartus in his *Holy Geography*. "Let my candle go out in a stink when I refuse to confess from where I have lighted it." Next year he edited and partly wrote a racy biographical Thesaurus of Protestant divines known as *Abel Redivivus*. He managed to get through the ordeal of the "triers" (or Board of Examiners who tested the "sufficiency" of divines) with the help of a "shove" from Cromwell's chaplain, John Howe, and was once more a lecturer in the City of London, where in 1655-6 he brought out his folio *Church History of Britain*. The learned Peter Heylyn regarded Fuller, if not as a time-server, as a far too placable Churchman, and attacked his

History as a rhapsody, full of impertinences, errors, and scraps of trencher jests. Fuller replied with a gentleness and moderation which eventually softened the heart of his critic and converted him into a trusty friend. In 1658 Fuller was made rector of Cranford, in Middlesex; at the Restoration he was reinstated to all his honours and emoluments, was made a D.D., and was well within sight of a bishopric when he was cut off by fever, at the age of fifty-four, in August, 1661.

Fuller's last great book, and one of the most characteristic, *The History of the Worthies of England*, was published posthumously by his son in 1662. Its "endeavour" was to record the natural resources and most eminent worthies of each county in order. But of all biographical dictionaries it is certainly the most rambling, and also the most facetious, Fuller's peculiar humour finding scope in quaint anecdotes about all the notoriety of his day. Alike in his references to public calamities and his converse with private individuals, Fuller was utterly unable to repress this overmastering tendency to jocularity. It ought at any rate to be true that he once caught a tartar in a certain Mr. Sparrowhawk, of whom he asked what was the difference between an owl and a sparrowhawk. The reply was that an owl was fuller in the head and fuller in the face, and fuller all over.

The combination in Fuller of wit and learning, erudite fancy, and the humblest gossip made him the darling of Coleridge and Charles Lamb. He had been one of the most popular writers of his time, and one of the first who made writing pay. The eighteenth century wits were prone to look down upon him as a buffoon; but in reality he is neither coarse, vulgar, nor irreverent. He excels nearly all his contemporaries not only in clearness of style, but also in a gentle and humorous kindliness which sometimes becomes delicately beautiful. It cannot be denied that Fuller is read far less than his present reputation as "an appetising bundle of contradictions" would seem to warrant. This is partly due to the fatigue felt by many at the frequency of his jokes and his maxims. As a model both of prose style and of temper he deserves to be read far more than he is.

Sir Thomas Browne was born in Cheapside, London, on October 19th, 1605. His father was a London mercer of a good Cheshire family; but he died when Thomas was a child, and his mother married Sir Thomas Dutton. The

boy's pecuniary interests seem to have been somewhat neglected. He was, however, sent to Winchester and to Pembroke College, Oxford, whence he took his Master's degree in 1629. Attracted by his love of physical science to the medical profession, he spent some years in travel and study at Montpelier, Padua, and Leyden, where he took his doctor's degree, and then settled down to a country practice at Shipley Hall, near Halifax. In 1637 he left Shipley, and settled finally at Norwich, where he passed forty-five years of scarcely interrupted prosperity. No man of talent, not even Herrick, stood more completely aloof from the great political struggle. From the heats of religious controversy he detached himself with a like contemplative contempt. His mind was so constituted that he held it to be essential to hold opposite views on every subject. He was thus at the same time one of the most religious, one of the most philosophic, one of the most sceptical, and one of the most credulous of men. His habitual mood is determined by an attraction towards the two opposite poles of humour and mysticism. In his great book, the *Religio Medici*, Browne indulges in some disparaging remarks upon marriage. "The whole world," he says, "was made for man; but the twelfth part of man for woman. Man is the whole world and the breath of God, woman the rib and the crooked part of man." He wishes, after Montaigne, that we might grow like trees, and so avoid this foolish business of matrimony. Shortly afterwards he married a lady of whom it is said that she was so perfect that they seemed to come together by a kind of natural magnetism, had ten children, and lived very happily ever afterwards. When Charles II. visited the capital of East Anglia in 1671, Norwich was afflicted with a shy mayor, a bird almost as rare as the phoenix, about whom the author of *Vulgar Errors* speculated so freely. And so the honour of knighthood devolved upon Dr. Thomas Browne. In addition to the *Religio Medici*, written about 1635-6, but not printed until 1642, the two famous works published by Browne were *Pseudo-doxia Epidemica*, better known by its English title

of *Vulgar Errors*, 1646; *Urne-Buriall* and *The Garden of Cyrus*, published together 1658. The busy, prosperous provincial doctor, whose whole life was "wrapt in a pure flame and ecstasy of high curiosity," survived until 1682, when he met his end philosophically on his seventy-seventh birthday, nearly a quarter of a century after the completion of his literary work.

Browne's earliest work, the *Religio Medici*, is a sort of confession of faith, revealing a deep insight into the mysteries of the spiritual life. In this he by no means confines himself to theological matters, but takes his reader into his confidence upon a host of questions as abstruse as those debated by the schoolmen,¹ intermingled with curious passages of self-laudation in which he enlarges upon his charity, tolerance, and perfect freedom from both meanness and pride. On such subjects, with a seasoning of Talmudic conceits and metaphysical subtleties, he pours himself out with all the artless and undisguised volubility of Montaigne. In Browne, however, there is much more of the poet; he is perhaps the most poetic Englishman that has ever habitually written prose. His thought and expression seem fused into one, and there is a sense of mystery, humour, and incommunicable charm about all that he writes which will always confirm fond readers in the belief that *Religio Medici* (with its "beautiful obliquities") is the most fascinating book ever written.

Browne, perhaps, attained his highest distinction as a stylist in his grave meditation to which he gave the name *Hydriotaphia*, a word of his own composition. The discourse originated with the discovery in 1647 of forty or fifty old urns containing burnt bones in a field at Old Walsingham, in Norfolk. The five chapters on urn-burial are the least discursive of Browne's writings. In them he takes up his abode in the charnel-house, and finds himself unexpectedly at home. We can imagine nothing graver. The rhythm has the solemnity of the passing bell; almost every word is a sepulchre; the very ornaments are flowers of mortality. But the dignity of this strange dead-march of funeral emblems is ever

¹ Thus he discusses whether after Lazarus was raised from the dead, his heir would be justified legally in detaining his inheritance. Other topics are: Does goat's blood dissolve diamonds? Do Jews stink? Why are negroes black? What to say after sneezing. Should Adam be represented with a navel, or no? See Stephen's *Hours in a Library*; Symonds's introduction to *Religio Medici* (Camelot Classics); *Sir T. Browne*, by Edmund Gosse (English Men of Letters, 1905). A good text is furnished in Charles Sayle's edition of 1904. The classic editors are Simon Wilkin and W. A. Greenhill; while of *Urne-Buriall* the best edition is that of Sir John Evans (1893).

on the increase, and at the close of the fifth chapter the author rises to the occasion with a sombre impressiveness and a dirge-like intonation which will long resist the opium of time. It is one of the finest examples we have of Gothic prose, full of dark corners and grotesque finials, but greatly and profoundly imaginative in the highest sense of the word. Lamb compares it to a deep abyss at the bottom of which lie hidden pearls and rich treasure.

Browne's style is too peculiar and idiomatic ever to be widely popular; but he is, with Milton and Jeremy Taylor, one of the greatest masters of tranquilly elaborated and polyphonic English prose. Like the style of the pedant satirised in *Hudibras*, that of Browne was English cut on Greek and Latin. Master of six languages, he was for ever mingling his compounds and trying new experiments with derivatives. Many of these experiments, now completely "incrassated" by time, exercised a morbid influence upon the polysyllabic periods of Dr. Johnson. A great admirer, Coleridge, admitted that his style was often hyper-Latinistic. He spoke, however, with enthusiasm on Browne's originality in conception. "Rich in various knowledge and magnificent in his style, he is a quiet and sublime enthusiast with a strong tinge of the fantast: the humorist constantly mingling with and flashing across the philosopher, as the darting colours in shot silk play upon the main dye." The impress of his thought and manner have been strong upon such writers as Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Carlyle, Emerson, and Pater; he is seen most strongly perhaps in the contemplations of De Quincey. He has never been ranked so high as by a few critics of the last quarter of a century such as Saintsbury, Bullen, and, above all, Lowell, who calls him our most imaginative mind since Shakespeare. Taine regards him characteristically as a striking example of the Englishman's unconquerable obsession by churchyards, graves, tombstones, winding-sheets, and death's-heads.

The most famous of the young scholars who owed their advance to the patronage of Laud, and the ornatest, if not the greatest preacher in the golden age of the English pulpit, Jeremy Taylor, was born at the Black Bear, or Black Bull, Cambridge, probably in August, 1613. His father was a barber in the town, though his ancestors had enjoyed a small estate at Frampton, in Gloucestershire; and he traced his descent from the celebrated Rowland Taylor,

who perished at the stake in the third year of Queen Mary. He was well grounded at the free school, and entered Caius College as a poor scholar in August, 1626. He was thus a contemporary of Milton at Cambridge, where Taylor, who was already a fellow of his college, proceeded M.A. in 1634. He was now ordained, and, having preached for a friend at St. Paul's, the rumour of his eloquence reached Lambeth, whither he was summoned to preach before the Primate. Laud greatly admired his style, and deplored nothing but the preacher's youth; whereupon Taylor humbly begged his Grace to pardon that fault, and promised, if he lived, he would mend it. By Laud's advice Taylor now pursued his studies at All Souls', in Oxford, until in March, 1637, he was presented to the rectory of Uppingham, and soon afterwards made a chaplain to the King. In the struggles that were impending Taylor had committed himself on the losing side by his treatise on episcopacy asserted. In 1642, or thereabouts, he was ejected from his living at Uppingham, and followed the royal army in the capacity of chaplain. Of the other divines of this period it is interesting to remember that Fuller was at this very time picking up stories of English worthies in the rear of a marching column. Pearson was chaplain to the King's troops at Exeter, while Chillingworth acted as engineer at the siege of Gloucester in 1643. It was perhaps during his connection with the army that Taylor wrote the prayer which is now appended to the third chapter of his *Holy Living* commencing, "Place a guard of Angels about the person of the King." In 1644 Taylor seems to have been taken prisoner by the Parliamentary forces. He was soon released, however, and, under the patronage of Sir John Vaughan, decided to remain on in Wales and to set up a school. And there he had as an assistant the learned William Nicholson, who afterwards became Bishop of Gloucester.

While in this seclusion he wrote his celebrated *Liberty of Prophecy*, showing the unreasonableness of prescribing other men's faith, and the iniquity of persecuting opinions. In this Taylor suggests the Apostles' Creed or summary of fundamental truths as a broad basis of union. In 1648 Taylor was in London, and was permitted to pay a last visit to the King. Charles, in token of his regard, is said to have given him his watch and a few pearls and rubies which had adorned the ebony

case in which he kept his Bible. Long after that farewell, in a letter to John Evelyn, Taylor spoke with affectionate reverence of the departed saint. He returned to his seclusion at Golden Grove, in Carmarthen, in the neighbourhood of Grongar Hill, afterwards celebrated by Dyer, where he was continually cheered by the friendship of the Earl of Carbery, in whose family he spent many happy hours, and after whose seat of Golden Grove he called the *Manual of Devotion*, at one time almost without a rival in popularity, which goes by that name.

The year 1650 saw Taylor's famous *Holy Living*, completed in 1651 by *Holy Dying*, the Allegro and Penseroso of Christian ethics and Anglican devotion. Their apposite titles and the euphony of their author's name have served to embalm these little works in the popular mind. Far inferior in originality as they doubtless are to the works of Burton, Fuller, or Browne, they have exercised a continuous influence on such devout persons as Wesley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth, and have found a champion in the anything but sentimental mind of the author of *Horæ Sabbaticæ*.

To prose anthologists the musings and reveries of this prose poet, with his Virgilian ornaments, composite similes, and other flowers of speech, will always remain dear, while Taylor himself will survive as the most flowery and “honey-flowing” of divines and pietists—theologian we can scarcely call him. Standing between two tides, the tide of words and the tide of Puritanism, both of which came near to overwhelm him, Taylor (with his old patron Sanderson) was almost alone among the mighty men of old who survived the flood. His heart was gladdened by the Restoration, and the dedication of his great work of casuistry, *Ductor Dubitantium*, to Charles II. secured a mitre for him in the Irish Establishment. No better man, unless it were Ken, was so elevated by the later Stuarts. Bishop Jeremy Taylor died at Lisburn, and was buried under the communion-table at Dromore in August, 1667. It must be admitted that Jeremy makes monotonous reading. He writes with a peacock's feather, and every movement, however slight, not only of his pen, but also of his mind, is attended by flourishes.¹

¹ The standard edition of Taylor is Bishop Heber's (15 vols., 1822, revised by Eden, 1854). See also Coleridge's *Literary Remains*, Dowden's *Puritan and Anglican* (1901), Willmott's *Jeremy Taylor, his Predecessors, Contemporaries, and Successors* (1846), and Edmund Gosse's monograph in *English Men of Letters* (1904). Fuller's chief works were reprinted between 1831 and 1841, and his *Sermons* in 1891. There are *Memorial*, of his life by Arthur T. Russell (Pickering, 1844), a fuller *Life* by John Eglinton Bailey in 1874, and a sketch of his *Life and Genius*, with “Fulleriana,” by Henry Rogers (1856). See also Basil Montagu's *Selections from the Works of Taylor, Latimer, Hall, Milton, Barrow, South, Browne, Fuller, and Bacon*,* first published in 1805.

A much greater casuist than Jeremy Taylor was Robert Sanderson (1587–1663), a luminary of Lincoln College, and afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, who enjoys the greater honour of being enshrined with Donne and Herbert and Hooker in Walton's never-to-be-forgotten *Lives*. His *Nine Cases of Conscience Resolved* (1678) is a book of great intellectual vigour. His *Sermons*, too, are notable for their clear reasoning. Charles I. was wont to say that he might take his ears to other divines, but for his conscience he would always take that to Dr. Sanderson. Unfortunately, upon his premature death on January 30th, 1649, the King's conscience fell into very inferior hands. The very day after his execution appeared a little book called *Eikon Basilike: the Portraicture of His Sacred Majestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings*.” It is a volume of reflections written in the first person, apparently by Charles himself, dealing with the vicissitudes of the reign from Strafford's death down to the threshold of his own, interspersed with prayers—just such a book as the King might have written at Carisbrooke and after. As a manifesto of monarchy in extremis it was a most successful venture, fifty editions being sold within fifteen months. As a genuine expression of the conscience of the King it appeals strongly to the historical sensibilities. If it is not by Charles, it is worse than nothing, for it is one of the cleverest, most audacious, and most cynical forgeries known. It was not seriously suspected at the time, even by Milton, who answered it. But after the Restoration the authorship was called in question and, before Junius, it was the reigning puzzle of literary history. The external testimony is so conflicting as to be almost worthless; but internal evidence up to the present runs rather strongly against the authorship (or, at any rate, the exclusive authorship) of Charles, so confirming the claim made by John Gauden (1605–1662), a very willow-pattern divine and casuist, who certainly wrote nothing else so skilful, but who was very suspiciously raised to the see first of Exeter and then of Worcester by Charles II. and Clarendon, presumably for some secret service. The problem, however, is not yet by any means completely solved. Our own opinion is that it was written by Charles with the aid of certain divines, edited by Gauden, and named by Jeremy Taylor.

CHAPTER II

JACOBEOAN AND CAROLINE POETS

1. DONNE AND DRUMMOND

"Donne, nature à la fois ailée et grossière, ange au pied fourchu, vers rocailleux, de l'immoralité simiesque de Sterne. . . . Mais il a le don, ce qu'aucun travail, aucune imitation des bons modèles ne saurait fournir ; partout où il va, quoiqu'il écrive, quelque boue qu'il remue, et jusque dans son hideux, ironique et malpropre *Progress of the Soul*, il est poète."—JUSSERAND.

THE actuality, the intensity, and the individuality of Donne represent a new note in English poetry. Elizabethan love poetry is rarely personal. Ideal and graceful though it commonly is, it is at the same time decidedly mannered, full of affectation and imitation, and, as a result, but too often either patently false, or conventional and cold. Donne may be brutal or ugly, but he is not cold, still less conventional. Fantastic to excess as he often is, he writes of his own experience. He takes us into his intimacy and runs through mood after mood. He probes unsparingly even into the arcana of passion.

The descendant on both sides of Catholics who had remained staunch through the religious troubles of Edward's reign, John Donne was born in the neighbourhood of Bread Street, London, in 1573. His father, a prosperous ironmonger, died two years after his birth. His maternal grandfather, no other than John Heywood, the famous writer of interludes in Henry VIII.'s reign, died in the Low Countries a few years later. In order to escape an embarrassing tender of the oath of allegiance, Donne went up to Oxford very early, entering Hart Hall at the age of eleven. He was already, however, extremely precocious,

and is said while there to have commenced a friendship with a lad much older than himself, the famous letter-writer and diplomatist of later years, Sir Henry Wotton. In May, 1592, he entered Lincoln's Inn, and two years later came into his considerable fortune. In the previous year he seems to have abandoned his Catholic convictions and embraced the Anglican Communion.

At the age of twenty-three Donne sailed in the famous expedition with Essex to Cadiz. In the following year he made the Island voyage, and transmitted to his friend Christopher Brooke those two poems, *The Storm* and *The Calm*. He returned from his travels finally in 1598, with a good knowledge of Spanish and Italian, to become secretary to the Lord Keeper. His curiosity seems to have been equally divided for a time between women and books,¹ and it was only very gradually that his sensuality worked itself out, and that his intellect acquired the mastery. All this time he was writing verses at intervals, and he committed a part of himself and of his experience to his poetry in a manner quite unique among the Elizabethan poets ; he must have felt keenly the incompatibility between its intellectual and rather brutal sensuality and the

¹ The fashion of trying to compete in Elizabethan English with the satirical moods of "angry Juvenal" or "crabbed Persius" set in among metropolitan wits between 1593 and 1599, when the practice of printing promiscuous libels was suppressed by a peremptory rescript of Archbishop Whitgift and a great conflagration of existing "satires" by Marston, Weever, Hall, Guilpin, Goddard, and others. It was to this scabrous style of writing that the precocious and independent mind of Donne was first directed in 1593. His *Satires*, school exercises for the most part, cleverly modelled on classic patterns, appeared forty years later.

iterated prettiness of those verses which his friends contributed with so much facility to the charming anthologies of that day. In his new series of poems following the satires, the lyrical *Songs*, Donne reveals the preoccupations of the idle and full-blooded, yet highly intellectual male, in a way that hardly any other poet has done—at least before the days of De Musset.

After a clandestine and not very creditable courtship he was privately married in December, 1601. The marriage, as it turned out, could neither be concealed nor annulled, and at the furious father's instance Donne was reluctantly dismissed from the post of secretary to the Lord Keeper Egerton and sent to the Fleet Prison. The father-in-law's wrath and persecution proved only transitory, but Donne was not reinstated in his secretaryship, and had for years to come no adequate means of support for his wife and growing family. Donne's private resources had greatly diminished; and for five or six years, first at Camberwell, then at Mitcham, his poverty seems to have involved him in something approaching distress. In 1608, however, his wife's father had sufficiently relented to allow her dowry to be paid, and Donne was henceforth in a position to assume the uniform of a court flatterer and pamphleteer, a rôle for which the extraordinary subtlety and pliancy of his mind, his remarkable sensibility, and the anxieties he had undergone, alike fitted him. The *Pseudo-Martyr*, which he published in 1610, and which was constructed to minimise the wrongs of the recusants and to deprecate their claim to a fair hearing, was probably merely one of a series of controversial writings undertaken with a view of bolstering up the Government, and written in the name of several divines who were bent upon establishing their claims for a substantial reward in the Church.

Donne is said to have afforded much gratification to James by his treatment of one of these subjects in debate; the King told him frankly that he must preach for his preferment. Donne consented, and took orders early in 1616; he was deeply skilled in all the arts of the sycophant, and it was somewhat of a plunge to exchange the certainty of private patronage for such an unstable assurance as that of court favour. But the step was more than justified; James was immensely impressed by Donne's preaching, in which he found the compound of learning, logic, and scholastic casuistry en-

tirely to his taste. Such sense and non-sense were alike congenial to James, who strained his influence to the utmost to extort the unwilling degree of D.D. from Cambridge University for the new preacher, and soon afterwards appointed him royal chaplain, and procured him a readership in Lincoln's Inn. The intellectual side of religious controversy appealed strongly to Donne, and he extended himself in a series of sermons of inordinate length, intricacy, and scholastic elaboration. The strain of this novel kind of labour racked his excitable nerves to the furthest point of tension, and his fame as a preacher seemed to be gained at the expense of what remained of his physical buoyancy. This attenuation of fibre is reflected very faithfully in the overwrought character of his writing at this period, both in his sermons and his letters. But his physical health was fortunately repaired by a leisurely journey through Central Europe in 1619-20, as chaplain to Lord Doncaster on his diplomatic mission to the Emperor. On his return from this, Donne's subservience to the most powerful influence of the court was suitably rewarded, and he was made Dean of St. Paul's (November, 1621). He was at last in a position to manifest that dignity and generosity of which he had always had the strongest artistic appreciation. His wife had now been dead four years, and Donne was able to devote an undivided attention to the worthy fulfilment of his spiritual duties; as in the case of Becket, the worldliness of his early career became obliterated, and the ecclesiastic was by way of being sublimed into the saint. At the same time the frequent illness to which he was exposed seems to have sharpened his already extraordinary introspective faculties, and the combination of this with Donne's amazing talent for the refinements of theology render the transformation which the cynical sensualist and the calculating courtier seems genuinely to have undergone one of the most curious of psychological problems. In his late years he was surrounded by admirers who, like Izaak Walton, marvelled at a sanctity so complete and so unassuming. Charles I. was numbered amongst his admirers, and fully intended to have made him a bishop, but by 1630 symptoms of a fatal disease began to declare themselves. His last great sermon in St. Paul's was delivered at Easter, 1630; a year later than this he wrote one of the most original of all his strikingly individual poems, commencing:

Since I am coming to that holy room,
Where with Thy choir of saints, for evermore
I shall be made Thy music, as I come
I tune my instrument here at the door,
And, what I must do then, think here before.

About the same time he caused that extraordinary portrait of himself to be made in a winding-sheet, with the upper part of his face disclosed, standing upon a large urn, a drawing which served as a model for that quaintly imagined monument in stone which is still preserved in St. Paul's. His death-bed, like so much of his life, seems to have been carefully studied by this amazing neuropath. It was finally on March 31st that, as Walton says, his body finally melted away and vapoured into spirit. He was buried in his cathedral, in which the preservation of his monument from the fury of the Great Fire may well appear in the light of a miracle. The volatile spirit of this extraordinary, subtle, and self-seeking, yet at times sublime, genius, had experienced little rest upon earth. After his juvenile (rarely Juvenal) satires, we have of Donne a few rather obscured and jagged but most singular lyrics, poems these of transcendental sensuality, highly intellectualised, abrupt, scandalous, ecstatic, fantastic, mocking, actual. Donne in them is a shameless realist, raising ugly and piercing screams of passion, which sound doubly raucous amid the pretty litanies of the professional and pastoral amorists who form the conventional *chorus vatum* of 1600 and thereabout. He presents in brief the graceless figure of an individualist before his time; and his strange new notes of sophistication and defiance were scarcely pardoned by contemporaries, even Ben Jonson. The younger men, of course, worshipped him, and Carew wrote of him as a king who

ruled as he thought fit
The universal monarchy of wit.

Walton, in his *Life*, characteristically tried to bury the outspoken lyrics, and expresses a devout hope that they have been forgotten and forgiven amidst the crowd of verse letters, obsequies, epigrams, elegies, and divine poems of Donne's later, more seraphic years.¹

Donne founded no school, though he, of

course, had imitators. That which was valuable in him was quite inimitable. He certainly did not found the school of religious poetry which produced Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan. Elizabethan poetry did not begin with Donne, nor did he give it anything permanent save his own poems, though his popularity no doubt stimulated this kind of poetic expression. As to his versification, it is hard to say whether he was the more careless or perverse. He has a fine ear, as he shows constantly, yet he is capable of verse so harsh and crabbed as to be a positive offence. He deliberately breaks up the natural sequence of accent, and trusts to his ear to restore the broken cadence by a nice balance of emphasis. No poet's cadence depends more absolutely on his meaning, and therefore it is indeed that his cadence is often tortured and crabbed. Yet at his best his verse has a depth of often broken music rarely equalled by more regular craftsmen.

William Drummond, born December 13th, 1585, was the eldest son of the first Laird of Hawthornden, his mother being Susannah Fowler, sister of Secretary Fowler. He was educated at the High School, Edinburgh, and at the recently founded University (M.A. 1605). Thence he visited London on his way abroad, and witnessed court spectacles at Greenwich and Gravesend in 1606, varying sight-seeing with study and reading such books as Sidney's *Arcadia*, Lyly's *Euphues*, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, a few pieces by Drayton and Dekker, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 1609, after about three years' travel and law study at Bourges and Paris, an accomplished dilettante in books and pictures, Drummond was back in Scotland. In 1610 he paid another visit to London, after which nothing remained but that he should settle in Edinburgh and be called in due course to the Scottish Bar. While he was about to do so, his father, Sir John Drummond (who had received his knighthood on James's accession to the English throne) died suddenly at the age of fifty-seven; and thus the poet, at the age of twenty-four, found himself Laird of Hawthornden, with ample means, free to choose his own

¹ With the exception of *The Anatomy of the World*, the *Elegy on Prince Henry*, and a few commendatory verses, none of Donne's poetry was printed before the posthumous quarto of 1633, *Poems by J. D., with Elegies on the Author's Death*. Considerable additions were made in the following issues: 1635, 1650, and 1669. There is a good modern edition in the Muses' Library (ed. Chambers, 2 vols., 1896); *Selected Poems* (Orinda Booklets V.), 1904; and the interesting *Life and Letters of John Donne** by Edmund Gosse.

course of life. What this course of life was likely to be might have been easily guessed by those who knew him. From his boyhood his disposition had been meditative and studious; abandoning all thoughts of the Law, he retired to his own house at Hawthornden, "and fell again to the studying of the Greek and Latin authors." Drummond attached himself to the school of Scottish writers who cultivated the pure new English; his uncle Fowler and Sir Thomas Hudson, the translator of Du Bartas, may have guided him in this direction; yet he was a Scot to the last, with a keen and studious fondness for Scottish history and traditions.

The death of James's eldest son, Henry, Prince of Wales, on November 6th, 1612, opened the flood-gates of the poets, both in England and Scotland; and in 1613 was published Drummond's first poem, *Tears on the Death of Mæliades*, which was perhaps the most gracefully poetical of all the tributes evoked by the occasion in Great Britain. After the publication of this poem Drummond became a close friend of Sir William Alexander, and furnished him with a commendatory sonnet to his forthcoming *Doom's Day*. About this time, notwithstanding his close retirement and serious studies, he was betrothed to a young lady named Cunningham, but in 1615, after the date of the marriage had been fixed, she died.

In 1616 appeared *Poems: Amorous, Funerall, Divine, Pastorall*. This second book of Drummond's may be called a memorial of his love and sorrow, with an appendix of miscellaneous sonnets, written at various times. Much is copied from Petrarch, Tasso, Guarini, Sanazzaro, and, above all, Marino.

After an absence of fourteen years King James resolved to revisit his native land, and on May 16th, 1617, he entered Edinburgh. Drummond, drawn from his retirement by the whirl and excitement of the King's visit,¹ thought it his duty not to be wanting with his own particular tribute; accordingly the long and very extravagant panegyric, *Forth Feasting*, was indited as a memorial of the visit. In it James is described as "Eye of our Western World, Mars-daunting King."

By the year 1618 Drummond was known

amongst English literary circles as a Scottish gentleman who wrote verses that were really English; Drayton seems to have been the first person to stretch out a hand of liking and recognition; and a correspondence was maintained between them. In the autumn of 1618 Drummond received the famous visit from Ben Jonson. Drummond made careful notes of the talk between them, in which the imperfect sympathy between the fastidious scholar and the free-spoken tavern wit is very clearly exposed.

In 1623, after six years of comparative dearth, appeared *Flowers of Sion*, by William Drummond, of Hawthorne-denne: to which is adjoynd his *Cypresse Grove*; a volume of sonnets and lyric or heroic verse, entirely philosophic or religious in character. The *Cypresse Grove* is a platonic meditation upon death, rich and sonorous in style, and anticipating much that came to full fruition in Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor. His later literary work was chiefly in prose, and his epigrams and satires were mostly political, and are of no literary value. In the year 1649, the year of regicides and their commonwealth, Drummond died on December 4th, and was buried in the church of Lasswade, about two and a half miles from Hawthornden.

All Drummond's valuable work is in the two publications of 1616 and 1623; and the best of it is extremely good. As a sonnet writer he stands easily above all his contemporaries save Shakespeare. The art of sonneteering seemed inseparable in that age from extensive borrowing, and Drummond was no exception to this rule, but he was an artist and a scholar, far removed from such light-hearted buccaneers as Lodge. Drummond is not a poet of love, or even a poet of sorrow. Though there is real melancholy in them, few would have supposed that the poems of 1616 refer to the recent and actual loss of a bride. He is at his best in his religious poems, and when in a mood of pensive and contented melancholy reflects, with conviction born of religion and the aversion from action of a natural recluse and student, on the vanity of human endeavour and worldly prizes. His religion was deeply influenced by Plato, and

¹ Drummond's brother-in-law, the author of *Scot of Scotstarvet's Staggering State of Scots Statesmen*, was knighted upon the occasion, and became Sir John Scot. On Drummond, see Masson's *Drummond of Hawthornden*,* 1873, a good edition of the *Poems* for the Muses' Library by W. C. Ward (2 vols., 1894); and an essay on Drummond's Library (presented in 1627 to Edinburgh University) in Whibley's *Literary Portraits*.

frequently like Wordsworth, he uses almost pantheistic language. His God is a god of beauty and love, and he is ecstatic rather than

philosophic in his contemplations. He has not the subtlety or the strange strength of Donne, but he has far more religious feeling.

2. THE CAROLINE LYRISTS: CAREW, LOVELACE, HERRICK, SIR JOHN SUCKLING

THE epithet Caroline is certainly not a term of precision. Its chronological application is ambiguous, for it might apply equally well to the works of Bunyan and to those of Herrick. Nor has the short period from 1625 to 1642 any very distinctive character of its own. Yet the lyrical poets of the reign of Charles I., who ranged themselves on the Cavalier side, do form a small group to themselves to whom the convenient title of Caroline may without too much ambiguity be applied. In the light-hearted gaiety of Carew and Herrick, in the sparkling or pathetic grace of Lovelace or Suckling, in the religious fervour of Herbert and Crashaw, we can trace an under-current of protest against the sombre asceticism with which the Puritans sought to eliminate joy from life, elegance from literature, and beauty from worship.

One of the vainest, most artistic, and most irresponsible of this group was Thomas Carew. Born in Kent either in 1594 or 1595, one of the younger sons of an injudicious and irascible Master in Chancery, Sir Matthew Carew, Thomas graduated from Merton College, Oxford, in 1611, when he was entered at the Middle Temple. Showing little aptitude for the law, he was packed off in 1612 to join the household of the English Ambassador at Venice, Sir Dudley Carleton. Carleton retained his services as secretary when he was transferred to The Hague in 1616. But Carleton had to get rid of him in the same year owing to the licence which he allowed himself in his criticism of the Ambassador and his lady. Carew then spent nearly three years in the unsuccessful quest for employment. He laboured under the imputation of being a backbiter, and was reproached by his father for his dissolute mode of life (some naughtiness is certainly reflected in such a poem as *The Rapture*). In 1619, however, he went in the train of Lord Herbert of Cherbury to France. Henceforth our knowledge of his career is fragmentary. But

in 1628 we know that he was appointed a gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and a year or so later Sewer in Ordinary (that is, sewer and taster) to his Majesty. He was selected to write the gorgeous masque called *Cœlum Britannicum* given at the Banqueting House on Shrove Tuesday, 1633. And he seems to have led a merry life at the court among the chief wits of that age until his premature death in 1639. Carew is to-day remembered almost exclusively by five or six choice lyrics.¹ None of these exceed twenty lines of verse, and no anthology can be considered complete without two or three of them. They include: "Go, thou gentle whispering wind"; "Ask me no more"; "In Celia's face a question did arise, Which were more beautiful, her lips or eyes"; "Give me more love or more disdain"; "Kiss, lovely Celia, and be kind"; "You that will a wonder know"; and "He that loves a rosy cheek, or a coral lip admires." His epitaph on Donne has the fine couplet:

Here lies a king that ruled as he thought fit
The universal monarchy of wit.

To the same college of wits as Carew, with the same conventions, the same ideals, and the same standards, belonged the Cavalier poet, Richard Lovelace. Grandson of one of Queen Elizabeth's knights and son of one of James's, Sir William Lovelace, who was killed in 1628, after brave service under Sir Horace Vere in the Low Countries, the poet Richard Lovelace was born at Woolwich in 1618. He was taught at the Charterhouse, and began writing poetry while he was at Gloucester Hall, Oxford, during 1635-6. He wrote a comedy, *The Scholar*, and a tragedy called *The Soldier*. He was one of the bold squires of Kent who, in April, 1642, at Maidstone Assizes, resolved to petition the House of Commons praying that the King might be restored to his rights. For his temerity in delivering this petition he was, on April 30th,

¹ The early editions of Carew's *Poems* are dated 1640, 1642, 1651, and 1671. An excellent edition was done for the Muses' Library by A. Vian, 1899.

committed to the Gate House at Westminster. There, during a seven-weeks' imprisonment, he wrote that celebrated song called "Stone walls do not a prison make." While in London Lovelace consorted with the chief musicians, poets, and painters of the day. He was well-known to Lely, the Cottons, and Andrew Marvell, and he may have been the addressee of Suckling's famous "I tell thee, Dick, where I have been." During 1646-8 he was once more in the King's service, and he ran through his money in attempts to serve his sovereign. Returning to England in 1648, and once more imprisoned, he beguiled his confinement by framing for the press his *Lucasta*, *Epodes*, *Odes*, *Sonnets*, *Songs*. Lovelace was released from prison by warrant in December, 1649, but he was a ruined man. Alms were conveyed to him from Charles Cotton and others, but he sank and died in 1658 in a mean lodging in Gunpowder Alley, between Shoe Lane and Fetter Lane, close to the spot where, a little more than a hundred years later, Chatterton was given a pauper's funeral. He was buried at the west end of St. Bride's, one of the churches burnt in the fire of 1666.

Lovelace's connection with St. Bride's suggested to Richardson the name of the hero of *Clarissa*, and thus, by an ironical destiny, "Lovelace" passed through the agency of *Clarissa* into common use in the eighteenth century as a synonym for a libertine. Though supplanted in England by the older Lothario from Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, it still survives in France. Lovelace's immortality rests upon two short lyrics in *Lucasta*, "Tell me not (sweet) I am unkind," and *To Althea from Prison*, containing the famous couplet, "Stone walls do not a prison make, Nor iron bars a cage." In the whole garden of Caroline lyric poetry these are perhaps (if we except a blossom or two of Wither's, such as "Shall I, wasting in despair?") the most perfect flowers. It cannot be denied that Lovelace is both imitative and unequal; his thought is tortuous and his expression often careless. There is a spirit of a nobleness in his best verses, as charming to every reader as the gallantry and heroism of his life; but he is at

other times, especially in the *Posthume Poems* (1659), frigid, conceited, and not a little obscure. His popularity is shown in the numberless imitations; and, yet, where else among contemporary lyrists shall we attain to the happy valiancy of that noble couplet:

I could not love thee, dear, so much
Lov'd I not honour more?

Robert, son of Nicholas Herrick,¹ a goldsmith of Wood Street, Cheapside, was born in London, and baptised at St. Vedast's, Foster Lane, on August 24th, 1591. In the following year Herrick's father committed suicide by the novel method of jumping out of an upper window, leaving a good estate in trust for his children. At sixteen Robert (after Westminster) was apprenticed to his uncle and guardian, Sir William Herrick, a favourite goldsmith and banker of James I. But in 1614 he abandoned the business, and entered St. John's College, Cambridge. After taking his bachelor's degree in 1617, he settled in London, cultivated the society of wits and courtiers, took the time of day from Ben Jonson, passed round in manuscript the lightest of light lyrics, and was welcome wherever songs and glees were held in honour. He may have had a small post in the chapel at Whitehall: at any rate, he took orders, wrote a *Farewell to Sack*, and in September, 1629, was presented to the vicarage of Dean Prior, near Totnes, in Devonshire.

Some of the bantlings of his wit first saw the light in a miscellany of 1640 called *Wit's Recreations*. A volume of religious rhymes containing one or two gems, such as his thanksgiving to God for his house, and much more doggerel, appeared in 1647 under the title of *Noble Numbers; or, Pious Pieces*. A corrective to this was found, and Herrick's true talent revealed in his *Hesperides*, or "works both humane and divine," of 1648. Before this appeared Herrick had been tumbled out of his sequestered parish by the storms of the civil war, and had returned gaily to London, where he seems to have dropped his clerical style and habit, called himself Robert Herrick, Esquire, and renewed the acquaintance of the tem-

¹ Various spelt, as Allingham's allusion hints:—

"Hayrick some do spell thy name,
And thy verse approves the same;

For 'tis like fresh-scented hay
With country lasses in't at play."

Herrick is excluded from Southey's *Select Works of the British Poets from Chaucer to Jonson* (1831), which contains the best poems of Greville, Davies, Daniel, Donne, Carew, the Fletchers, Habington, Wither, Browne, Davenant, Lovelace, and the whole of Drayton's *Polyolbion*.

pestuous petticoats of his youth. To this period may possibly be referred his *Welcome to Sack*. In the Caroline College of Wit-Crackers Herrick stands alone, in so much as he rhymed not as an elegant accomplishment, but by vocation. He versified as instinctively as Wordsworth. The joy of life was strong within him, and found expression in a continual stream of fleurettes, posies, and mottoes. Now and again he soars for a more sustained flight with an exquisite lyrical movement. But it is always essentially a butterfly flight. The poise and colour and sunshine of it are perfect; but of the music which comes from the emotion felt, or mystery shadowed, there is practically none. Herrick speaks of himself as singing of "brooks and blossoms, birds and bowers," of April, May, of June and July flowers:

I sing of may-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes.

It is true he does rhyme on these subjects, and on many others besides under earth and heaven; but he is really poetical on the smallest possible number of themes, and those the common property of all tuners of the elegant lyre. Let us drink and be merry, for to-morrow we die. Love's a stuff will not endure. Where are the snows of yester year? Herrick can touch all these subjects with enchanting delicacy and with some tenderness. He imitates freely from Horace, Catullus, Martial, Marot, Ronsard, Du Bellay, Marlowe, Ben Jonson. He anticipates Prior, Praed, Moore, and Fitzgerald. He is, perhaps, essentially a writer of *vers de société* before his time. Before, that is to say, either the material or the instrument was quite ripe for such treatment. He is pagan, malicious, scholarly, Anacreontic, and, above all, frivolous, as every accomplished occasional writer should be, but he is also inveterately quaint. His poems are as nice as kisses—kisses that are never more than playful. The proportion of Herrick's verses that is of really high quality is extremely small, but a few of his songs have come to be almost everywhere known.

These indispensable little poems combine an amatory playfulness and quaintness with a lyrical daintiness and melody so enchanting as fully to justify the resuscitation of Herrick by the nineteenth century as a poet ranking with Wither, Crashaw, Collins, and Hood; but not to justify the excessive laudation of Herrick as second, third, or even first of English lyrists, into which some enthusiasts have been betrayed.¹

After fourteen more years of London life the versatile Herrick once more resumed a surplice. Having witnessed the festivities of the joyous Restoration, a favouring gale wafted him back to his old moorings at Dean Prior in August, 1662, and there he was buried on October 15th, 1674.

Sir John Suckling was born at his father's house in the parish of Twickenham in January, 1609. His grandfather was mayor, and his uncle dean, of Norwich. His father sat in Parliament for Reigate, was knighted at Theobalds in 1616, and held a lucrative post in the royal household at the same time as Carew. After a promenade in polite learning at Cambridge (Trinity) he passed to Gray's Inn, and so to Paris and Italy. In 1632 he returned to London, after a term of service under the great captain of that age, Gustavus Adolphus, and plunged into all the prodigalities of the court. In feather-headedness, and also, it must be added, in licence, he seems to have been a true prototype of Rochester and Buckingham. At one time he was all for gaming, and won or lost thousands at cribbage—a game he is said to have invented—or ninepins; at another time the black eyes of the ladies attracted him, and he made a magnificent entertainment in London, at which he presented all the young beauties with silk stockings and garters. Cudgelled into a handful by an irate rival, he turned philosopher, travelled about with a cartload of books, discussed learned themes with Falkland and Boyle, and championed Shakespeare against the classics. In January, 1639, he raised a troop of horse, magnificently accoutred, for the Scots campaign. But his scarlet and gold contingent

¹ There is a perfect rage to-day for reprinting, and we suppose re-purchasing (more problematically for re-perusing) the poets of the seventeenth century. Among the ranks of the reprinted Herrick is easily first favourite. Witness recent editions in the Golden Treasury Series (F. T. Palgrave), Aldine and Canterbury Poets, Muses' and Red Letter Libraries, Century, World, and Temple Classics, Caxton and Newnes Reprints, and many others. His monument at Dean Prior went up in 1857. See *Edinburgh Review*, January, 1904. He is represented by seven pieces in *The Golden Treasury*, and no less than twenty in the *Lyra Elegantiarum*. Lovelace still awaits an edition by Mr. Thorn Drury. For his Life see *Diet. Nat. Biog.*

fled, like the rest of the army, without striking a blow; and Suckling's own coach was captured by Leslie full of magnificent clothes.

Suckling remained a staunch royalist to the end, and Charles placed much reliance upon him, though he was scarcely a man of the type that one would repose great trust in at an extremity. He rallied to the Queen in the same spirit as the French officers rallied round Marie Antoinette in July, 1789. But the "army plot" failed ignominiously, and Suckling fled in May, 1641, to Paris. The deplorable end of the rich, gay, and witty, but spendthrift, knight is thus related by Aubrey:

"Anno (1641) he went to France, where, after some time being come to the bottome of his fund that was left, reflecting on the miserable and despicable condition he should be reduced to, having nothing left to maintain him, he (having a convenience for that purpose lyeing at an apothecarie's house in Paris) tooke poyson, which killed him miserably with vomiting. He was buryed in the Protestants' churchyard. This was (to the best of my remembrance) 1646." Aubrey's recollection of the year of his death is unquestionably wrong, since an elegy upon the "incomparable" Suckling appeared in 1642; and it is probable that the poet met his death in the early summer of that year.

In *The Session of the Poets* Suckling hits off, with an audacity which we could ill spare, the foibles of all the most celebrated wits among his contemporaries, conspicuously Ben Jonson, Tom Carew, Will Davenant, Tobie Matthew, and the author himself. The idea was imitated in the next generation by Rochester (*Trial for the Bayes*) and Sheffield (*Election of a Poet Laureate*); subsequently by Byron, Leigh Hunt, and many others. The famous *Ballad upon a Wedding*, commencing, "I tell thee, Dick, where I have been," addressed, says tradition, to Dick Lovelace, and written upon the marriage of Roger Boyle to Lady Margaret Howard at Northumberland House, Charing Cross, has already seen the light in *Wittes Recreations* of 1640. Hallam remarks sagely of Suckling that though deficient in imagination, he left former song writers far behind in gaiety and ease. It is not equally clear, he adds, that he has ever

been surpassed since. Of wits about town he was at least the *facile princeps* of his day:

In music made of morning's merriest heart.

If we admit that Suckling did not excel in imagination, it must be conceded that he had the gift of fancy in the most superlative degree. To no feebler endowment can we attribute the delight which the sportive and frolicsome humour of the "ballad" never fails to produce. The artful simplicity of its stanzas reaches its climax in the figure of the bride dancing, when—

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out.

But the distribution of excellence through every part of this remarkable *jeu d'esprit* is such that we can scarce equal it out of *John Gilpin*. The wit, *insouciance*, and airy levity of minor lyrics, such as—

'Tis now, since I sat down before
That foolish fort, a heart
(Time strangely spent!), a year or more;
And still I did my part;

or—

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together;

and—

I prithee, send me back my heart,
Since I can not have thine,

can hardly be approached in occasional poetry until we come on to Prior and Praed. As a playwright "natural easy Suckling," as Milla-mant called him, was rather dull, and his dramas are precious only inasmuch as they harbour a few poems of price, such as "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?"

What seems to have struck Suckling's contemporaries—and it is really a priceless gift—was the directness and vivacity of his diction and the airy persiflage which he substituted for the distressful yearning of the conventional Elizabethan lover. Wither's best songs are distinguished by a charming simplicity, Lovelace's by a brave and gallant spirit, Suckling's are marked by a gay and sparkling impudence. This was to become the *Musa Proterva* of Sedley and Rochester.¹

¹ The best edition of Suckling is still *Selections*, with life and critical remarks by the Rev. Alfred Suckling, 1836. An edition for the Muses' Library is in preparation by Hamilton Thompson. See *Dict. Nat. Biog.* Suckling is well represented in W. J. Linton's charming anthology, *Rare Poems of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, * 1883.

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS POETRY

“Thoughts too deep to be expressed,
And too strong to be suppressed.”—GEORGE WITHER.

Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan—Wither and Quarles—Habington, Pordage, and Traherne.

THERE is something the least bit unpleasant about the avowed epicureanism of parson Herrick and the outspoken contempt which he expressed for the “salvages” who were his parishioners, whether or no Kingsley’s ideal be true, and it be

Better to have the poet’s heart than brain,
To feel than write; but better far than both
To be on earth a poem of God’s making.

It is with a sense of wholesome contrast that we turn from the celebrator of Anthea’s instep to the saintly and single-minded George Herbert. It is like passing from the atmosphere of a revel and the capping of verselets over the wine-cups to the serenity of Herbert’s own “Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright!”

George Herbert was born at Montgomery Castle on April 3rd, 1593 (the same year as his proud biographer Izaak), being the fourth son of Sir Richard, and younger brother of Edward, famous as Lord Herbert of Cheshire, destined to become a pioneer of English deism. George had only reached his fourth year when his father died; the rest of his childhood passed “in a sweet content” under the care of a mother whose virtues he never tired of expounding; he was taught at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge (M.A. 1616), and was distinguished both as scholar and musician. In 1619 he became Public Orator at Cambridge, and gratified James I. by the flattering terms in which he acknowledged the King’s gift to Cambridge of a copy of the *Basilicon Doron*. Bishop Williams presented him to the prebend

of Leighton Ecclesia; he went to live in the neighbourhood; was influenced by the saintly Nicholas Ferrar, of Little Gidding; set to work to restore the ruined church at Leighton, and finally decided to enter into sacred orders (1626), to which his mother had often persuaded him. In April, 1630, at the instance of the Earl of Pembroke, Charles I. presented Herbert to the rectory of Bemerton, between Salisbury and Wilton. There the poet passed the remainder of his life, which he devoted to the saintlike performance of the duties of his office and to the elaboration of a series of religious poems which are probably without a rival in the English language. But his strength was not equal to his self-imposed tasks. Consumption declared itself, and after an incumbency of less than three years he died on February 24th, and was buried beneath the altar of his church on March 3rd, 1633. Dying childless, he left his property to his wife Jane (Danvers), whom he had married in 1629; his books to his friends, and his manuscript verses to Nicholas Ferrar.¹

Apart from a few Latin and Greek verses, all Herbert’s poetic work was published after his death. With the exception of his sonnets to his mother, eight psalm renderings given in Playford’s *Psalms and Hymns* (1671), and two stray poems first collected by Dr. Grosart, it is all to be found in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, brought out by Ferrar at Cambridge in 1633. These poems, forming a Jacob’s ladder of the religious emotions, were all written in strict self-communion and without

¹ The best *Life of George Herbert* since Walton’s is that of John J. Daniell (1902). The best annotated edition is that of George Herbert Palmer (3 vols., 1905). There are many reprints, Pickering’s, Nichol’s, and Grosart’s being among the best. See *Cambridge Modern History*, vol. iv., and *Times*, December 22nd, 1906.

the slightest regard to public scrutiny. Hence many of their peculiarities: their close-packed elliptical phrasing, their simplicity of unwrought expression often mistaken for affectation, their profoundly intimate feeling. He was deeply imbued by the intellectuality and ingenuity of Donne. The result is often an obscurity akin to the obscurity of Browning, an elusiveness resembling that of Emerson, a turn of phrase as far removed from the obvious and also from the superficial as a phrase of George Meredith. But the thought implicit is well worth unravelling, for under it lies the emotion of one who had been gradually drawn to the religious life and stirred by it to his inmost soul; of one whose appeal to God against the sense of sin is more intimate than that of any other religious poet, and of one who combines an intellect second only to that of Donne, with a far deeper emotional existence. Those to whom we should naturally appeal as the best judges of religious poetry, Crashaw and Vaughan, Cowper and Coleridge, have all expressed their profoundest admiration for Herbert. Charles I. in prison, Cowper in the agonies of religious dejection, both found in him the truest solace. Failing an adequate commentary, the reader must himself creep with difficulty into the heart of Herbert's meaning: the true inwardness of resignation, of prayer and communion with God, of the passionate sense of sin, of humility, and of charity, will nowhere else be so deeply and intellectually revealed to him.

Taking the risk of obscurity Herbert gains in some whole poems and in more single stanzas a power of illumination that frequently seems almost miraculous. Such power of intuition is most clearly seen perhaps, though it is clogged with a difficult and spasmodic utterance, in such poems as *Employment* and *Man*. In such poems as *The Flower* and *Prayer*, with its grand finale of thought that seems almost too deep for words, the thought is linked with a mysticism approaching to ecstasy, which is uncommon in Herbert. In that wonderful poem, *The Temper*, it is combined with an elegant dignity and an intensity which is of the very centre.¹

The juxtaposition of George Herbert with

Hooker and Donne in the exquisite pages of Walton has led to his being regarded with a kindly and condescending affection involving a complete under-estimate of his poetical value. This under-estimate is based in the main upon two misconceptions—first, that Herbert is primarily the poet of a religious party representing the High Church Anglicans under the Primacy of Laud. This is a complete mistake. Herbert's poems are in their essence the ejaculations not of a Churchman but of a Christian. The second misconception is due to the likening of Herbert and his poetry to the seemly and decorous formalism of Keble. To confuse the nature of the two poets is just about as intelligent as to confuse the functions of priest and sacristan because they are both employed about the altar. Herbert is the interpreter of mysteries, Keble the beautifier of the formal and external. To recognise the message of Herbert in the music of Keble were to mistake for the chalice of the grapes of God the embroidered cloth that adorns the altar.

Among the foremost admirers of Herbert was the erratic and ecstatic genius of Richard Crashaw, the most mystical and perhaps the most unequal of English poets. The only child of William Crashaw, a Puritan incumbent of Whitechapel, Richard was born about 1612-13, and went to Charterhouse and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, but owed the best part of his education to Nicholas Ferrar, whose Protestant nunnery was within a ride of Cambridge. Under this influence his early training in Protestant divinity gave place to a mystical and fervent devotion, which led him to refuse to take the Solemn League and Covenant and to his consequent ejection from his fellowship at Peterhouse by the Parliamentary Commissioners.

Soon after his ejection, Crashaw seceded from the Protestant Church and retired to France. His friend Cowley, who was in the French capital in 1646 as secretary to Lord Jermyn, found him in great poverty (a "meer scholar and very shiftless") at that time. Queen Henrietta was then an exile in Paris, and it is said that Cowley or Dr. Gough and Mr. Car introduced Crashaw to her, and she

¹ More purely poetic in conception is *Life*, "I made a posie while the day ran by," or *Church Music*. Into the four short stanzas of *Virtue*, still more into the six stanzas of *The Quip*, Herbert contrives to condense a whole morality play. That Herbert could combine playfulness and finish with a genuine depth of feeling in place of the essential frivolity of the courtly makers of his time, is triumphantly shown in such a poem as *Submission*. His quaint ingenious symbolism is well seen in *The Elixir*.

gave him letters of recommendation to Italy, whither he went and became secretary to Cardinal Palotta at Rome. He probably remained in Rome until 1650, when, having by his plain speech in regard to certain ecclesiastics made his position an uncomfortable one, he was transferred to the Lady Chapel of Loretto, of which Palotta made him a canon. He died of fever after but a few weeks' residence, and was buried at Loretto within the chapel in 1650. The poet Cowley laid one of his best elegies as a tribute on his grave.

His chief poems were published in 1646 (revised 1648) under a title suggested by his study of Herbert, *Steps to the Temple: Sacred Poems, with Other Delights of the Muses*. Among the secular poems indicated by the sub-title are *Wishes to his Supposed Mistress*, beginning with the unforgettable

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible she,
That shall command my heart and me,

and *The Muses Duel*, a rendering of Strada's Latin fable of the poet and the nightingale, notable for what Mr. Swinburne calls "its dazzling intricacy and affluence of refinement, its choiceness and subtlety." But the flame of Crashaw's genius soars to real ecstasy only at the touch of religious emotion in the poems (collected in the volume called *Carmen Deo Nostro*, Paris, 1652) in which he addresses Jesus, the Holy Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and Santa Theresa. His poem on the Name of Jesus is an extraordinary concatenation of inspirational flashes and fantastic conceits; but the summit of Crashaw's lyrical exaltation is attained in the octosyllabic "Hymn" and the last dozen couplets of the poem on "The Flaming Heart" of Saint Teresa.¹

Of all the conceitists, from Donne and Herrick to Cowley and Vaughan, Crashaw was perhaps the most conceited. He sank deeper, and in brief momentary flights it is possible that he fluttered higher than any of his contemporaries. Plain critics have reproached him for being a wire-drawer and a hyperbolist, but the school of enthusiasm—Coleridge, Swinburne,

Macdonald, and Dowden—do reverence to his raptures, and have perhaps successfully vindicated his claim to be regarded as the poets' poet. For such a distinction Crashaw undoubtedly possesses this qualification: he is "caviare to the general."

Henry Vaughan, the scion of an old Welsh family, was born at a farmhouse near Brecon in April, 1622. He studied with his twin-brother Thomas, the alchemist, at Jesus College, Oxford. Both of the brothers suffered deprivation and imprisonment in the royal cause, though Thomas only actually bore arms for the King. About 1645 we find Henry settled as a physician in his native county, the county of the Silures, whence he always described himself as "Silurist."²

It was almost inevitable that Vaughan should start his poetic life as a disciple of Ben Jonson. His first-fruits as an author were accordingly *Poems, with the Tenth Satire of Juvenal Englished*, published in 1646. Other translations followed on *Olor Iscanus* (Swan of Usk), written about 1647, published without authority in 1651. Meantime a serious illness had profoundly deepened and intensified Vaughan's religious convictions, as may be seen in the devoutly mystical tone of his chief work, *Silex Scintillans* (Sparks from the Flint), or *Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, London, 1650, re-issued with a second part in 1655. This second part contains the crown of all Vaughan's poetry, the now widely famous:

They are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit lingering here;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

Such poems as these had little interest for the age of Rochester and Burnet. Aubrey himself could not find a word to recommend the literary productions of his relative to Anthony Wood. Vaughan lived on obscurely at Skethrog until April 23rd, 1695, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." Vaughan was forgotten effectually for fully a century after his death until, at the close of the eighteenth century, a copy of *Silex Scintillans*

¹ The best text of Crashaw is that of A. R. Waller in the Cambridge English Classics, 1904. Of Crashaw and Vaughan alike there are recent and convenient editions in both the Muses' Library and the Little Library.

² They were born, says Aubrey, at Llansanfraid in Brecknockshire by the River Uske (Isca). Their grandmother was an Aubrey: their father, "a coxcombe and no honester than he should be—he cosened me of 50.s. once."

fell into the hands of Wordsworth. Subsequently to this, in his notices of the English poets written in 1819, Campbell speaks of Vaughan as one of the harshest even of the inferior order of the school of conceit, though he allows him a few scattered thoughts "like wild flowers on a barren heath." The passage of another century has greatly increased Vaughan's fame, though it still reposes upon a few rare beams of transcendental beauty, emerging from a cumulus of thought, the

general tone of which is dark and obscure, while in form it is often chaotic and rugged. The durability of his fame is ensured by his two poems, *Beyond the Veil* and *The World*:

I saw eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,

and by that beautiful fragment, *The Retreat*, in which the perfected grandeur of the *Intimations of Immortality* is so distantly yet distinctly foreshadowed.¹

¹ Two singular compilers of religious "Emblems," hymns, songs, pious aphorisms, and the like in this period were that most cavalier of Roundheads, George Wither, and that most plebeian of Royalists, Francis Quarles. As a poet, of course, Wither reaches "starry heights" far above Quarles. A natural warbler, in his darling measure, the heptasyllabic, he published delicate poetry between 1611 and 1622 (*The Shepheards Hunting*, *Withers Motto*, *Fair Virtue*, and *Fidelia*, which enshrines that famous and most exquisite song, "Shall I, wasting in despair?") and went on drivelling in verse almost down to his death in 1667, *æt.* 79. The joy and confidence and lilting elasticity of his early secular poems present a sharp contrast to the scholarly sweetness of Drummond or the subtleties and perversities of Donne. While pent in the Marshalsea Gaol in early years, Wither reverted with fond yearning to the sylvan beauties of his native Bentworth, of Alton, and the silver pool of Alresford, so that Charles Lamb says with some justice that his prison notes are finer and fresher, if not freer, than the woodnotes of his poetical brethren. The godly Quarles was a staunch loyalist, but his poetry is opaque and partakes more of Jordan than of Helicon; it serves as letterpress to the Latin mottoes and strange Dutch emblems which constitute the *Emblemes*. By *Fra. Quarles* of 1635. Succeeding ages have agreed to describe these expositions as quaint; but what Horace Walpole thought subject for derision, we should only expect Charles Lamb to find delectable. The *Emblemes* are entertaining in an early edition, not otherwise. The *Poetry of Wither* is to be studied in the excellent edition of Frank Sidgwick (2 vols., 1903). The copious Quarles—dull, peaceful, prolific, a fond votary of the angle down along his slow-moving native streams of Essex—was included by Grosart in his Chertsey Worthies Library (3 vols., 1874). Three other serious poets of the age of Milton must be included in this brief mention. William Habington, a Wigornian (1605—1654), wrote a tedious panegyrical miscellany called *Castara*, 1634, in honour of his adored wife, Lucy Herbert. John Pordage (1607—1681), an astrological parson and Behmenist mystic, calling himself "Father Abraham," who survived a highly dangerous charge of Pantheism, wrote a quantity of very strange mystical verse of a theological tendency. Thirdly and lastly, the new-discovered poet, Thomas Traherne (1635—1674), who combined peculiarities of Donne and Cowley with equally contrary characteristics of the simple and saintly Herbert and the mystical and obscure Vaughan. The son of a cobbler at Hereford, Traherne was educated at Brasenose, Oxford, and is noted by the unsparing curiosity of Aubrey as having entertained a phantom apprentice in a red waistcoat in his chamber by moonlight. After publishing one or two divinity tracts, notably *Roman Forgeries*, 1673, he died at Teddington in the capacity of chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, and was buried October 10th, 1674. In some of his transcendental poems such as *The Salutation*, *The Choice*, *Love*, *Thoughts*, *The Estate*, written in a very irregular metre and manifestly inspired in large measure by George Herbert, Traherne occasionally hits upon expressions, ideas, and even phrases curiously premonitory of Blake and Wordsworth. He is a true poet of very limited range, and the world is indebted to Bertram Dobell for the handsome collection of his *Poetical Works* (Dobell, 1903).

CHAPTER IV

DIVINITY AND LEARNING FROM HOOKER TO SELDEN

"What went they out to see? A man clothed in purple and fine linen? No, indeed; but an obscure, harmless man; a man in poor clothes, his loins usually girt in a coarse gown, or canonical coat; of a mean stature and stooping, and yet more lowly in the thoughts of his soul: his body worn out, not with age, but study and holy mortifications; his face full of heat pimples, begot by his unactivity and sedentary life. . . . God blessed him with so blessed a bashfulness that in his younger days his pupils might easily look him out of countenance; so neither then, nor in his age did he willingly ever look any man in the face: and was of so mild and humble a nature that his poor parish-clerk and he did never talk, but with both their hats on, or both off, at the same time: and to this may be added, that though he was not purblind, yet he was short or weak-sighted; and where he fixed his eyes at the beginning of his sermon, there they continued till it was ended; and the reader has a liberty to believe that his modesty and dim sight were some of the reasons why he trusted Mrs. Churchman to choose his wife."—WALTON, *Life of Mr. Richard Hooker*.

An age of ecclesiastical controversy—Richard Hooker—*The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*—Archbishop Ussher—Sir Henry Savile—John Selden—Sir Henry Wotton—The "ever-memorable" John Hales—William Chillingworth—Francis Godwin.

AS Elizabeth's reign progressed, the spread of Puritanism—that is, of distinctively Calvinistic forms of religion—indicated the approaching breakdown of the basis of compromise on which Elizabethan uniformity in religious matters rested. It was natural that one of the first symptoms should take the form of an attack upon the bishops; many of these were in the Elizabethan *régime* extremely worldly and self-seeking men, chosen rather for their pliancy and power of "forking up" than for any spiritual or moral pre-eminence. The Puritans objected to them not only for their sponginess, but on principle as institutions savouring of Popery and as guardians of an Act of Uniformity which legalised the use of the old vestments and lent itself to catholic interpretation. Nor were the Puritans the only enemies of the bishops, upon whose wealth the poorer clergy of all shades looked askance. At court also there was a party gluttonous for more Church property. Such factors produced the Martin Marprelate controversy—a virulent paper and pamphlet war which raged from 1589 to 1593, in spite of all the threats and prohibitions of constituted authorities. But the age was one of ecclesiastical controversies, and disputes were rife between Anglican and Catholic theologians, between High and Low Church within the pale of the Establishment, between "Marians" and "Genevans," between Brownists and Presbyterians, Presbyterians and

Episcopalians, and so all round the circle. Two of the most noted books of the time were thus produced by apologists for the Anglican settlement—Bishop John Jewel (whose Latin *Apologia* for the Church of England appeared in 1564, and was Englished by the sister of Lady Burghley and mother of Lord Bacon) and "the judicious Hooker."

Richard Hooker, born in March, 1554, was a native of Exeter and a nephew of John Hooker, otherwise known as John Vowell, the foremost of Holinshed's editors when the famous *Chronicle* came to be re-edited in 1597. This uncle paid for Richard's schooling at the High School, and found a patron for the promising boy in the famous Dr. Jewel. Jewel knew Cole, President of Corpus Christi College at Oxford, where Hooker was accordingly (1568) entered as a clerk or servitor. Hooker stayed on at college as a scholar greatly respected for his Hebrew and other linguistic learning until 1584, when he was married, and a year later was appointed Master of the Temple. Here began Hooker's labours in defence of the apostolic character of the English Church. Travers, a bold preacher with a popular manner, was afternoon lecturer in the Temple, and maintained in the pulpit Presbyterian views of Church government. Hooker preaching in the forenoon, the pulpit, as Fuller said, "spake pure Canterbury in the morning and Geneva in the afternoon." Travers, silenced by Whit-

gift on the ground of insufficient ordination, continued the war in print. Hooker replied to the charge of latitudinarianism; but, unfit for the worry of controversy, begged from his patron some quiet post in the country, and in 1591 removed to the living of Boscombe, near Salisbury. Here, in peace and privacy, he investigated the general principle involved in the position of the Church of England, and organised the already begun eight books of his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, of which the first four were published in 1594. Translated in 1595 to the better living of Bishopsbourne, near Canterbury, he sent a fifth book (longer than all the rest) to press in 1597. He died at Bishopsbourne on November 2nd, and was buried November 4th, 1600. A sculptured portrait bust in the chancel of the beautiful little church stands to us for a noble type of Elizabethan divine. Books VI. and VIII. of the *Polity* were published in 1648; a seventh book appeared in 1662. Books VII. and VIII. appeared to have been edited by Gauden from notes left by Hooker. Doubts have been raised as to the genuineness of the sixth book. It does not conform with Hooker's plan; but Keble, Hooker's chief editor, had no doubt it was substantially Hooker's, though not designed as part of the *Polity*.

The objects of Hooker's work may thus be summed up. In the first book he endeavours to show the philosophical position of the Church of England, and the place of such an institution in a universal scheme. The second book is an argument to refute the Puritanical view of the Bible as being a cyclopædia of all knowledge and all truth. The object of the third is to prove that there is no ground for the assumption that Scripture must of necessity prescribe a form of Church government. The fourth book is a defence of the Church of England ceremonies against the charge of being Popish; and the fifth contains a long and minute vindication of the Church on all the points attacked by the Puritans. The sixth book was designed to carry the war into the enemy's country, and to confute the Presbyterian theory of Church government. The seventh is an exalted vindication of Episcopalianism; and the eighth an explanation of and apology for the doctrine of the royal supremacy.

The main object of Hooker is thus to uphold the settlement made by Queen Elizabeth's Government, and known in later days as the *via*

media, against the attacks of the party formed by the Protestant exiles who, expelled from England under Mary, and repulsed by the Lutherans, had fallen under the sway of Knox, Calvin, and the Swiss reformers of Zurich. Hooker is in this way the literary exponent of the practical policy of Whitgift; and continually upon a knife-edge between Rome and reform, symbolism and whitewash, the Bible and the Church, tradition and logic, the dialectician's task is an almost superhuman one. To defend an elaborate compromise, the result of peculiar political conditions created by Tudor lust, despotism, and the greed of the rising official families of Russells and Cavendishes and Cecils who fawned upon the throne, might well seem to a philosopher a task beyond human power. Undoubted it is, nevertheless, that in the liturgy of the new Church Cranmer created a monument of the power and beauty of the English language that has never been rivalled; while in his defence of the polity of the same Church and the laws that ought to govern such polity Hooker created a prose classic ("the first in our language") which remains to this day the most representative and original example of great and high-sounding English prose.

The three greatest preachers on the Church side were Joseph Hall (1574—1656), Bishop of Norwich, the English Seneca, already celebrated for his *Characters*; John Donne (1573—1631), the poet and Dean of St. Paul's, whose poems were printed in folios dated 1640 and 1649; and Lancelot Andrewes (1555—1626), chaplain of Whitgift, and eventually Bishop of Winchester. Though a serious scholar who never left his book before noon, Andrewes was a vivacious wit, and his felicitous citations made him a great favourite in the pulpit, the star of preachers. His *Preces Privatae*, or private devotions, constructed out of precious stones of ancient piety, became almost instantly popular. Bishop Andrewes was a noted apologist of his Church, and his example and influence were long active forces within it.

A primacy among our scholars of this period may justly be claimed for James Ussher, the celebrated Archbishop of Armagh, who was born in Dublin on January 4th, 1581. While a student at the newly founded Trinity College in Dublin, Ussher's preference was for poetry; but a chance phrase in Cicero, "nescire quid antea quam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puerum," revealed to him what was

evidently for him the right path, of history and archæology. He came over to buy books for his college, and was soon known to Camden and the antiquaries as the most learned of all Irishmen. His reading made of him a zealous Protestant and predestinarian, and the Calvinists pointed with pride to his *De Ecclesiarum Christianarum Successione et Statu* (1612) as a worthy monument of their faith and erudition. In 1625 he was made Primate of the Irish Church, but the rebellion drove him to Oxford. Later, by refusing to take part in the Westminster Assembly, he put the seal upon his steadfast professions of loyalty. The death of the King profoundly affected him. Cromwell treated him with indulgence, and he was respected by all parties; but he died in the shade of adversity and retirement at the Countess of Peterborough's seat at Reigate on March 21st, 1656. While at Oxford he was in a good position for advancing his great chronological work, *The Annales* (I., 1650; II., 1654), for which he is celebrated. This is a chronological digest of universal history from the creation of the world to the dispersion of the Jews in Vespasian's reign. He fixes the creation of the world at 4004 B.C.¹

A close rival of Ussher in historical scholarship was a man of an earlier generation, Sir Henry Savile, *vir doctissimus* according to Joseph Scaliger, and generally admitted to be the most learned Englishman in profane literature at the court of Elizabeth. In 1591 he brought out his translation of *Four Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus* with *The Life of Agricola*, forming a kind of continuation to Richard Grenewey's translation of *The Annals*. Between 1610 and 1613 Savile issued from his own private press at Eton in eight folio volumes, at a cost estimated at over £8,000 (equal to more like £50,000 in our money), a sumptuous edition of St. Chrysostom. As a publishing venture it was a failure, for a much cheaper Latin edition, containing much of Savile's material, was brought out by the Jesuits

at Paris very shortly after its appearance. But it greatly exalted Savile's reputation in Europe as a munificent scholar, and this was further enhanced by his foundation of two professorships named after him at Oxford. He died at Eton on February 19th, 1622, being then seventy-three years of age.

The most interesting of the savants of the early Stuart time was John Selden (1584-1654), a man whose social position enabled him to employ his uncommon learning as an instrument of power, while a trenchant wit and irony lent a double-edge sharpness before which some of the most formidable persons of the day experienced unfamiliar tremors. Selden was perhaps the greatest of the powerful and numerous tribe of English antiquarian lawyers. He was a Whig constitutionalist before his time, and we have in him not a few premonitions of Temple, Halifax, Chesterfield, Burke, Blackstone, Fox, De Lolme, Disraeli, Bagehot, and other theorists upon constitutional questions of the first moment to statesmen at times of political tension or crisis.

Born at East Tarring, near Worthing, Selden was educated locally at Chichester, and at Oxford, but it was not until he got into the congenial atmosphere of the Inner Temple that his great powers began to develop. About 1605 he made the acquaintance of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, the learned baronet, in whose library in Palace Yard (transferred in 1753 to the British Museum), a veritable El Dorado to the literary student, he met Savile, D'Ewes, Spelman, Vincent, Ben Jonson, Sir Roger Twysden, and other erudite persons. The first fruits of his research were seen in some very crabbed productions upon the ancient law of Britain; in 1610 a small treatise on *Single Combat*; in 1614 a study upon *Titles of Honour*; an edition of Fortescue, a treatise on the *Jews in England*, a Discourse on the Office of Lord Chancellor, and finally in 1617 his famous *History of Tythes*. In this work, by the implied denial of the right of the clergy to

¹ His great predecessor Scaliger, in his *De Emendatione Temporum*, had fixed it at 3950 B.C., adhering closely in the main to the vulgar Jewish chronology and to the authority of the Masoretic text. Scaliger was followed by Petavius, who fixed the Creation at 3984 B.C. and the Exodus from Egypt at 1531 B.C. His chronology was generally adopted by Roman Catholics. Thus Ussher was to a large extent in leading strings when he began his investigations, the scholarly repute of Scaliger and Petavius carrying with it the consensus of nearly all learned Europe. He was thought, however, to have made a brilliant and daring innovation by assigning 130 instead of seventy years to Terah at the time of Abraham's birth. The net result of his labours was to enlarge the era of Petavius by twenty years, fixing the Deluge at 2348 B.C., the Exodus at 1491, and the foundation of the Temple at 1012 B.C. His system was adopted in the English Bible and generally among the divines of the Reformed Church.

such tithes *jure divino*, Selden showed what a formidable handle might be made of erudition and knowledge of precedent in approaching the burning questions of the hour. In the political controversy of the seventeenth century both parties claimed that law and precedent were on their side, while both alike were apt to be extremely vague in their references. By his wonderful power of manipulating ancient and precise records Selden acquired a political influence which it is doubtful if a pure savant has exercised before or since—at any rate, in England. Though James I. deprecated some of his deductions he was very much interested in his details, and Selden was thenceforth a person of indisputable importance. Charles was highly pleased with his demonstrations of the exclusive rights of England in the narrow seas (*Mare Clausum*, 1636). Both Lords and Commons consulted him on questions of right and precedent. Amid the bitter controversies of his time Selden was naturally a trimmer both by conviction and scholarly predilection for peace. He was strongly opposed to Ship-money and to certain illegal acts of Charles and Buckingham, but he was no less hostile to the aggressions of the Commons in regard to the militia and the exclusion of bishops, while to the despotism of the King or Protector, bishop or presbyter, he was equally and impartially antagonistic. All parties reciprocated his suspicion, but he was above all a thorn in the sides of the Westminster divines. A cardinal principle with him was the supremacy of the state. This dry light of detachment gives a special charm to his caustic sayings. As a writer he is apt to be prolix, discursive, and embarrassed by the weight of his own learning. As a talker we have Clarendon's word that he was a most clear discourser and "had the best faculty in making hard things easy and presenting them to the understanding of any man that hath been known." His most prized work, accordingly, for other than purposes of learned reference, is his *Table Talk*, put together by his secretary, Richard Milward, and published in 1689—thirty-five years after his death and "magnificent" funeral in the Temple Church.

Sir Henry Wotton attained to the coveted post of Provost of Eton College in 1624, and he thanked God that after a life of so much bustle he was able, like Charles V., to enjoy the quiet of the cloister. As Provost he conferred great benefits on the school and scholars, a

number of his thoughtful and sympathetic letters to noblemen who put their sons or grandsons under his charge being still extant. At his hospitable table distinguished strangers met the most hopeful pupils of the college. But none surpassed Wotton himself either in wit or in rich store of reminiscence; for he had mixed intimately, not only with the great Elizabethans but also with most of the great foreigners of the age. It was he who forwarded a copy of Bacon's *Organum* to Kepler, and who furnished Milton with the necessary advices and introductions on his setting out for Italy. As a corrective to books and learned conversation, Wotton speaks of the delight with which, when the month of May came, he would go out with his angling-rod. He was also a great collector of Italian pictures and engravings. So many occupations left him but little leisure for the *magnum opus* upon the history of England to which Charles I. summoned him. All that he left eventually were the fragmentary poems and essays, and the urbane familiar letters included after his death in the *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*.

A near neighbour of Wotton's at Eton who frequented his parties and who resembled him both in great accomplishment and small achievement was the "ever memorable" John Hales. Born at Bath in 1584, he was educated at Corpus Christi at Oxford, whence he became university Greek lecturer and a fellow of Merton. He had a brief diplomatic experience as chaplain to Sir Dudley Carleton in Holland, and was present at the synod of Dort. On his return he seems sincerely to have shunned Church preferment, secluding himself among his books as a fellow of Eton College, and dividing all his small surplus income between books and charity. Hales himself was notoriously a walking library, to whose resort the learned courtiers did seriously incline when the court was at Windsor. His great learning and profound judgment were combined with the most punctilious integrity and the utmost modesty in demeanour, so that there was no man of the day of whom more people spoke well. Of a firm though equable spirit, he became a fugitive during the Puritan revolution, but died eventually at Eton on May 19th, 1656, being then seventy-two years of age. His *Works* were first collected and printed by the noted Glasgow printers Robert and Andrew Foulis, in three volumes, 1765.

The story of his defence of Shakespeare

against a tirade of Ben Jonson, and of his undertaking to find something on any topic treated by the ancients at least as well treated by Shakespeare, is well known. He is one of the finest examples we have in England of modest and self-denying authorship. At the time of his death it was found that he had sold his library and had parted by degrees with all his ready money in charity to deprived clergy and scholars.¹

The tolerant and latitudinarian views of Hales were shared by no one more fully than his friend William Chillingworth, the son of a mayor of Oxford, who was educated at the Grammar School there, and became in 1628 a Fellow of Trinity College, being then twenty-six years of age. He came early under the influence of the Laudian theology, but was puzzled by the criticisms of Bellarmine, and became dissatisfied with the evidence for the continuity of the Protestant Church. In 1630 he put himself under the tuition of the Jesuits at the College of Douay. But a course of Catholic theology effected a revolution in his views, and in 1634, having in the meantime returned to Oxford, he declared himself once more a Protestant. During the Civil War he adhered zealously to the Royal party, and in August, 1643, he fashioned an engine for the assault of the city of Gloucester. A few months later he was captured by the Parliamentarians, but was allowed to retire to the palace at Chichester, where he died on January 30th, 1644. He was buried in Chichester Cathedral, where his Puritan opponent, Dr. Cheynell, flung a copy of his "heretical" *Religion of Protestants* into the grave, that it might rot with its author and see corruption. His plea for toleration and

his appeal to the individual reason were naturally disregarded during the heat of the conflict. But his ideas were revived with redoubled force after the Restoration, until after the Revolution of 1688 they became dominant under the influence of such men as Tillotson and Burnet.

Another of the most erudite Latinists and antiquarians of this abundant period was Francis Godwin, a Northamptonshire and Christ Church man, who owed his bishopric at Llandaff in 1601 expressly to his masterpiece of compilation and research, *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England since the First Planting of Christian Religion in this Island; together with the Brief History of their Lives and Memorable Actions* (1601, quarto). This was greatly improved in an edition of 1615, and translated into Latin in the following year as *De Præsulibus Angliæ*; Godwin, as a reward, was promoted to the more remunerative See of Hereford. Godwin also wrote annals, both ecclesiastical and civil, of the Tudor period. He died in April, 1633, leaving a great reputation for scholarship and a curious manuscript published in 1638 as "*The Man in the Moone, or A Discourse of a Voyage Thither*," by Domingo Gonsales, the Speedy Messenger." This work, which reveals an imaginative interpretation of the Copernican system, was translated into French by the indefatigable Baudoin in 1648, and imitated by Cyrano de Bergerac in his famous *Voyage de la Lune*.² Hints were obviously derived from it by Dr. Wilkins, one of the institutors of the Royal Society, for his *Discovery of a New World in the Moon*, while directly and indirectly it evidently influenced both *Gulliver's Travels* and Paltock's *Adventures of Peter Wilkins*.

¹ His most notable, though still brief, contribution to eirenical literature was his tract on *Schism and Schismatics*, probably written about 1636, though not published until 1642. Perhaps the earliest open plea for complete religious toleration, an idea absolutely revolting to Tudor thought, was the *Religious Peace, or A Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, of Leonard Busher, first printed in 1614 (see Masson's *Milton*, iii. 102). It has been suggested that James I. was influenced by this sincere and well-written advocacy when he declared to Parliament in 1614, "No state can evidence that any religion or heresy was ever extirpated by the sword or by violence, nor have I ever judged it a way of planting the truth." Among the broad-minded Jacobean divines a high place belongs to Thomas Morton (d. 1659), an anti-Laudian bishop and great benefactor of learned men, such as Hooker, Walton, Basire, Barwick, and Durie (a warm advocate of Protestant union). Among the Laudians were John Buckeridge (d. 1631) and Richard Montague, both great preachers. Godfrey Goodman (d. 1656), Bishop of Gloucester, was too Romanising for Laud. He was the author of the delightfully circumstantial *Court of James I.*, first printed by Dr. Brewer in 1839. His advanced *Fall of Man* (admired by Milton and Southey) was answered by Bishop George Hakewill (d. 1649), a divine, Boswell tells us, who helped to form Dr. Johnson. Among the Puritan preachers of this time the most justly noted were Thomas Adams of Wingrave, "the prose Shakespeare of Puritan theologians"; Daniel Featley of Acton (d. 1645), author of *Ancilla Pietatis*; and Richard Sibbes (d. 1635), an emotional preacher who exhibited extraordinary power in his pulpit at Gray's Inn.

² Among other English authors who enjoyed the unusual honour of translation before 1650 were More, Foxe, Buchanan, James I., Bishop Hall (*Characterisms*, 1610), Bacon (*Essays*, 1612), Greene (*Pandosto*, 1619), Sidney (*Arcadia*, 1620), and Lord Herbert.

CHAPTER V

IZAAK WALTON: OCCASIONAL AND MINOR PROSE OF THE AGE OF MILTON

“Simon Peter said, ‘I go a-fishing’; and they said, ‘We also will go with thee.’”—JOHN xxi. 3.

James Howell—Harrington—Wilkins—Digby—Heylyn—Dugdale—Sir Thomas Herbert.

THE life of Izaak Walton from 1593 to 1683 almost bridges over a span of the Stuart dynasty. It affords a kind of talisman against the fanaticism which intervened between the Renaissance and the Restoration in England. Isaac—or, as he liked to write it, Izaak—Walton was born at Stafford on August 9th, 1593. Of his education and early years we know practically nothing, but, according to Wood, he obtained a competency as a linen-draper in London. This seems hardly consistent with the fact that in his marriage of 1596 he was styled an ironmonger, while records show that he was made free of the Ironmongers’ Company in November, 1618. In 1643 Walton was able to retire from trade on a modest competency, and in 1644 a vestryman was chosen for St. Dunstan’s in room of “Isaac Walton, lately departed out of this parish.” Wood says that Walton retired to Stafford, but if so he was back in London in time for Laud’s execution early in 1645, and in 1650 he was at Clerkenwell preparing for press the *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, to which he prefixed the brief yet charming life of Sir Henry Wotton which came out in 1651. In 1647 (after being seven years a widower) he had married again, Anne, daughter of Thomas, and half-sister of Bishop Ken.

Walton was sixty when in 1653 he published his immortal treatise, *The Compleat Angler, or The Contemplative Man’s Recreation*, being “a discourse of fish and fishing not unworthy the

perusal of most anglers.” The first edition (price eighteenpence) differs materially from the second, which appeared under Walton’s superintendence in 1655.¹ The first edition is cast in the form of a dialogue between two persons—Piscator and Viator; while, in the second, three characters—Piscator, Venator, and Auceps (falconer)—sustain the discourse. Totnam Hill, however, is still the scene, and a May-day morning the time of the meeting. The idyllic mood in which Walton’s favourite pastime is treated had been to a certain extent anticipated in Nicholas Breton’s *Wits Trenchmour in a Conference had Betwixt a Scholler and an Angler*, published in 1597, and in John Dennys’s unaffected and quaintly humorous poem on *The Secrets of Angling*, published three years after the author’s death, in 1613. Yet in the perfection of finished art, discovered in a perfect simplicity, *The Compleat Angler* remains unique in our literature.

In 1665 Walton gave to the world his Life of Richard Hooker, which he dedicated to George Morley, Bishop of Winchester, at whose palace at Farnham he found an asylum for his old age after the death of his wife in 1662. Five years later appeared his Life of George Herbert, and in the same year, 1670, the four Lives of Donne (the favourite of Dr. Johnson), Wotton, Hooker, and Herbert were collected in a single volume dedicated to Morley. To this unrivalled collection of devotional biographies, unapproached alike in

¹ The last edition published in Walton’s time was the famous fifth edition of 1678, in which Charles Cotton’s “Instructions how to Angle for a Trout or Grayling in a Clear Stream” appear for the first time. The standard editions of *The Compleat Angler* are those of Sir Harris Nicholas (1836) and R. B. Marston (1888); to which may be added for reference the introductions by Lang, Lowell, and John Buchan (Little Library).

grateful simplicity and in humble admiration and piety, the Life of Robert Sanderson was added in 1678. Walton must have been well over eighty when he wrote it—truly the ripe fruit of a noble stem. Walton died at his married daughter's house in Winchester on December 15th, 1683, and was buried in the south transept of Winchester Cathedral.

Walton's career, says Mr. Andrew Lang, is seen to be that of "a man born in a humble position, but attracting by his charm of character and happy religion the friendship of learned divines and prelates. More than most authors, he lives in his writings, which are the pure expression of a kind, humorous, and pious soul in love with nature; while the expression itself is unique for apparent simplicity which is really elaborately studied art." His descriptions of flowers, fields, and streams are the prose of the poetry in Shakespeare's incidental rustic songs, or Marlowe's *Come Live with Me*. His love of music is continually evident in the pages of his *Angler*. His unaffected love of God and man won for him, after his death, the admiration of Dr. Johnson, who must also have been drawn to him as a Royalist and Churchman, of Wordsworth, of Lamb, and of Landor. The pastoral revives in his idyllic pages, and he has given the gentle sport a halo of fine literature which it has never quite lost. Culture and sport, poetry and prose, nature and art are reconciled most rarely in the choice simplicity and haunting cadences of the fondly remembered "Iz: Wa."

James Howell, the son of a Carmarthenshire rector, was born at Abernant about 1595, and was educated at Hereford Free School, and Jesus College, Oxford. After taking his degree he became the foreign agent of a glassware manufactory in Broad Street, London, and was sent to Venice to pick up competent workmen and the latest designs. After six years of this work he became an accomplished linguist, and was employed on one or two semi-diplomatic missions (Madrid-Copenhagen). In 1640 he published a political allegory in prose called *Dodona's Grove, or The Vocal Forest*. His services and talents already gave him a strong claim upon the Royalist party, when in 1643

his papers were seized by order of the Long Parliament, and he was committed (for eight long years) to the Fleet Prison. There he wrote a large number of political pamphlets, an ill-natured description of the people and country of Scotland, and a survey of the Seigneurie of Venice, published in the year of his release from the Fleet, 1651. Six years later he gave to the world *Londinopolis*, a gossiping perlustration of the city, largely borrowed from Stow, with interesting plates by Hollar. In 1661 he was appointed Historiographer Royal of England, with a salary of £100 a year. He died unmarried in Holborn, and was buried on November 3rd, 1666, in the Temple Church, where in the triforium gallery his costly monument may still be seen. It is an exaggeration to say that Howell was one of the first Englishmen to make a livelihood by his pen, yet few professional writers have worked harder than he did during his sojourn of eight years in the Fleet Prison. He owes his place in English literature exclusively to the *Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ*: familiar letters, domestic and foreign, divided into sundry sections, autobiographical, historical, political, and philosophical.¹

The eighteenth-century essayists from Steele and Defoe onwards borrowed much of Howell's manner and method and not a few of his stories. It is pleasant to be able to go so far back for one's travel talk and anecdote and to find the tap running so clear. Howell himself says that "running waters are purest," which being interpreted may be taken to mean that Howell writing in the manner of a diarist of travel mercifully avoids all stylistic preciosity. The result is a literary salad which has been the delight of the omnivorous reader, and is still verdant for the true book-lover, who for stray reading prefers an old book to a new one.

A writer who has some affinity to Howell, though ostensibly at least a political theorist, and is in fact somewhat difficult to classify, is James Harrington, who must be carefully distinguished from his remote kinsman Sir John Harrington (or Harington), the godson of Queen Elizabeth, the author of a version of Ariosto and of *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*.

James Harrington, the political theorist,

¹ 1645—1655: there is nothing very extraordinary about the letters. Sir Henry Wotton, Sir Tobie Mathew, and other gossips of James I.'s court had developed the Familiar Letter in imitation of Cicero, Pliny, and Seneca; but the *Epist. Ho-Elianæ* are more of an *olla podrida*, and come nearer to the divine *chit-chat* of Walpole and Cowper. His light touch in stringing together oddities and the fealty and flattery of Southey, Lamb, D'Israeli, and, above all, Thackeray, ensure a long life to Howell.

eldest son of Sir Sapcotes Harrington, of Rand, Lincolnshire, rambled from Oxford to Rome, where he refused to kiss the Pope's toe, adroitly excusing himself at a later date to Charles I. for what Sir Leslie Stephen agreeably calls his "rudeness" by saying that he would not kiss the foot of any prince after kissing the hand of King Charles. He visited Venice, and like most of the thinkers of that time was much impressed by the Venetian constitution and system of government. In 1647 Harrington and his friend Herbert were made grooms of the King's bedchamber at Holmby House.¹ The King loved his company, says Aubrey, only he could not bear to hear of a commonwealth; and Mr. Harrington passionately loved his Majesty. Often they disputed about government. Harrington was on the scaffold in January, 1649, and the King gave him a watch. After the King's death he began a scheme for a new form of government; this he embodied in a large book upon an ideal commonwealth, to which he gave the name *Oceana*. He was kept in confinement for two years or so upon the Restoration, and suffered much, Aubrey tells us, at the hands of Beelzebub and other evil spirits, dying finally at Westminster on September 11th, 1677, aged sixty-six.

Harrington's general scheme as expounded in *Oceana* comprised a popular assembly and a senate of members with the land qualification elected by the people in their precincts by secret ballot. The senate was to debate and propose laws, the assemblies to accept or refuse them only. The executive was drawn annually from the senate by a process of rotation. There was further to be limitation in the ownership of land, upon which Harrington held that all political power depended. He believed, too, in "a natural aristocracy," in free compulsory education, in an independent judicature, in liberty of conscience for all Protestants, and in the abolition of primogeniture. Many of his ideas are undoubtedly good and well expressed, but they are overwhelmed

by the multiplicity of detail, a glaring example being his explanation of the proper method of balloting drawn mainly from Venice. Many of his expressions, such as that in which he demands a government of laws not of men, or says that the exercise of just authority over a free people ought to arise from their own consent, have found their way into American constitutions.

The lighter vein of prose during what we may call the periodic period is well illustrated by Peter Heylyn, a native of Burford in Oxfordshire, a clever young Demy of Magdalen, who took up historical geography and published a book on the subject in 1621. James I. is said to have taken offence at a phrase in this book to the effect that France was a greater and more famous kingdom than England. In order to show that his heart was in the right place, Heylyn in 1625 made a journey through France and wrote an amusing satirical journal published many years later as a survey of France. This work and the geography which he subsequently enlarged into a cosmography, contained the most entertaining part of Heylyn's work as a stylist.

Heylyn's *Survey* remained a popular book in the eighteenth century, and many of his observations reappear in the works of Goldsmith, Smollett, and Sterne. But Heylyn was much better known in his own day as a keen controversialist, as the assailant of the Puritan Sabbath in his *History of the Sabbath*, written by royal command in 1636, of Bishop Williams and other opponents of Laud, and of the "falsities" in Fuller's *Church History*. But Heylyn's controversial acrimony was the mask of a kindly disposition, and his complete reconciliation with Fuller is a delightful episode in Heylyn's restless and somewhat irritable career as a critic. In 1642 he lost all his possessions, and became a fugitive in the land; yet when quieter times supervened in 1653 his parishioners in Alresford in Hampshire showed their affection for him by

¹ Another literary attendant of Charles during the last saddened hours was Sir Thomas Herbert, a kinsman of the third Earl of Pembroke, who published, in 1634, a once famous volume of *Travaile into Afrique and Greater Asia* (he had been in the Persian suite of Sir Dodmore Cotton). A fourth edition of this appeared in 1677. A Parliamentarian in politics, Herbert was appointed to attend the King at Holmby House. The King became attached to him, and on the fatal 30th January gave him a watch and his folio Shakespeare (1632). In 1678 Herbert printed a touching, minute, and ceremonious detail of the last two years of the King's life (*Threnodia Carolina*, 1678, reprinted several times as *Memoirs of the Last Two Years*, to which was added *A Particular Account of the Funeral of the King in a Letter to Sir Wm. Dugdale*). He was made a baronet in 1660, worked at antiquities for Dugdale, and died at York in 1682. An interesting sketch of Harrington's doctrinaire theories will be found in Scott's *Woodstock*.

restoring the chief articles of his furniture which they had bought for that purpose. From an academic point of view his most important works were those written towards the end of his career, in justification of Laud's attempt to restore ecclesiastical order, notably *Ecclesia Vindicata* and *Ecclesia Restaurata*, or *The*

History of the Reformation. At the Restoration he was restored to his prebend as sub-dean of Westminster, and he would probably have been made a bishop; but he was already so wasted by ague that he looked like a skeleton, and he died at Westminster on May 8th, 1662.¹

¹ Another exponent of this more active and concise English prose was Dr. John Wilkins, whose best known work, published in 1638 when he was only twenty-four years of age, was entitled *The Discovery of a New World; or, A Discourse Tending to Prove that it is Probable there may be Another World in the Moon, with a Discourse Concerning the Possibility of a Passage Thither*. In this treatise the learned doctor gravely discourses the practicability of a journey to the moon, and shows much ingenuity and humour in disposing of the serious difficulties in the way of such an attempt. Another treatise entitled *A Discourse Concerning a New Planet*, which appeared two years later, is interesting from its connection with a somewhat similar book, already described, of Bishop Godwin, and as being one of the earliest attempts of an English philosopher to uphold the validity of the Copernican system.

A more singular representative of the nebulous scientific theories of the period was Sir Kenelm Digby, a sucking philosopher whom the sober John Evelyn does not hesitate to call "an arrant mountebank," "the very Pliny of our Age for lying." The son of Sir Everard Digby, of Gayhurst, he strayed from Oxford to Florence, and thence to Madrid, returning from Spain with Prince Charles in 1623. His romantic courtship of Venetia Stanley, the history of which is recorded in his private memoirs, mostly written upon the Isle of Melos in 1628, at the close of a successful privateering expedition in the Mediterranean, the various confidential missions in which he was engaged, first on behalf of Queen Henrietta Maria, and subsequently in the service of the Protector, his numerous conversions and reconversions, and his alleged hectoring of his Holiness at Rome, serve alike to perpetuate the memory of one of the most fantastic characters of the period. His two most important works, *Of Bodies* and *Of the Immortality of Man's Soul*, were published at Paris in 1644, and owe much to the influence of Thomas White, a Catholic savant and Aristotelian with whom Digby lived for some time. His writings at their best appear to be a singular medley of Aristotelian philosophy, astrology, alchemy, grotesque natural history, and absurd superstitions. His treatise *Of Bodies* may be regarded as a choice supplement to Browne's *Vulgar Errors*, written in an inferior but not dissimilar style. Digby's friendship with Browne and with such thinkers as Descartes and Hobbes seems to have had the effect of investing his erratic speculations with an importance which they were far from deserving.

Of much greater interest in its bearing upon the after-history of Literature was the germination during the sterile period of the Civil War of the institution which was to become far-famed as the Royal Society. Mushroom societies for exploring the secrets of Nature had sprung up in Italy and elsewhere from 1560 onwards, but this was the first of the kind definitely to take root. Archbishop Parker had founded the Old Society of Antiquaries in 1572, but after various vicissitudes it was dissolved by James I. Edmund Bolton projected a Royal Academy in 1617, but this collapsed on James's death. Charles I. granted a licence for a Museum Minervæ in 1635, the year of the definite inception under the auspices of Richelieu of the famous Académie Française. To England, nevertheless, belongs the honour of first establishing north of the Alps a society for the investigation and advancement of physical science. The first meetings of a small scientific club were held about 1646 in Dr. Goddard's lodgings in Wood Street. Among the chief founders was John Wilkins, afterwards Bishop of Chester, who had studied deeply in physics and mathematics, and who received from the Parliament party the headship of Wadham College; there in 1648 he harboured a small knot of University men who used to meet for the cultivation of experimental philosophy as a diversion from the painful thoughts excited by public calamities. Among these philosophers were John Wallis the mathematician, Seth Ward, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. Jonathan Goddard, Christopher Wren, and two remarkable eccentrics, Robert Boyle and Sir Kenelm Digby. A little later on, "these divers worthy persons inquisitive into natural philosophy and other parts of human learning did by agreements meet weekly in London on a certain day to treat and discourse of such affairs." In its early days the Society was known as the "Invisible College," and before 1660 it seems to have had a regular habitat at Gresham College in Bishopsgate Street, where Wren was Professor of Astronomy. In 1659 the worthy John Evelyn began to take keen interest in the proceedings. Wallis records that the subjects discoursed of were "the circulation of the blood; the valves in the veins; the venal lactæa; the lymphatic vessels; the Copernican Hypothesis; the nature of comets and new stars; the satellites of Jupiter, the oval shape of Saturn, the spots in the sun, and its turning on its own axis; inequalities and selenography of the Moon; the several phases of Venus and Mercury; the improvement of telescopes and grinding of glasses for that purpose; the weight of air, the possibility or the impossibilities of vacuities, and Nature's abhorrence thereof; the Torricellian Experiment in quicksilver; the descent of heavy bodies, and the degrees of acceleration thereof; and divers other things of like nature." The Records of the Society begin on November 28th, 1660.

CHAPTER VI

TRANSITIONAL POETS

"Who now reads Cowley? If he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit.
Forgot his epic, nay Pindaric art!
But still I love the language of his heart."—POPE.

Cowley—Waller—Marvell—Rochester, Sedley, and Dorset—The Westminster wits—Charles Cotton.

AN interesting but belated and long-neglected group of transitional poets is formed by the philosophical lyrists who flourished at the close of the Commonwealth and may be described collectively as disciples or rivals either of Donne and Cowley or Carew and Waller. This last cluster put forth by the dying Renaissance in England may be extended to include not only Cowley, Joseph Beaumont, Henry More, William Chamberlayne, Thomas Flatman, Thomas Stanley, and "the matchless Orinda," but also Waller, Davenant, Denham, Cleveland, and for convenience' sake, Andrew Marvell, and one or two of the minor lyrists of the Restoration.

Abraham Cowley, the most popular English poet of his time, was born in Fleet Street, near Chancery Lane, in 1618, and was the posthumous son of a respectable stationer (and grocer). His precocity was exceptional, and he may be truly said to have lisped in numbers. In his twelfth year he composed a short epical romance, while in his fifteenth he brought out his *Poetical Blossomes* (1633). A study of *The Faerie Queene* confirmed his resolution to become a poet, and when he proceeded from Westminster to Trinity at Cambridge in 1637 his poetic fame had preceded him. He was already a fellow of his college in 1641 when he produced his comedy of *The Guardian*, subsequently metamorphosed and greatly improved under a more familiar name, *The Cutter of Coleman Street*. Three years later a satire on the Puritans compelled his withdrawal to Oxford, whence Cowley followed the Queen to

France (and so met and befriended Crashaw) as secretary and diplomatic agent. He conducted private correspondence in cipher and made some dangerous journeys on the King's behalf to the Low Countries, Jersey, Scotland, and elsewhere. He had written little since his popular collection of amorous poems known as *The Mistress* appeared at London in 1647. In 1656 he was discovered in London and was for a short time imprisoned; but in the same year he found means to issue a folio collection of his poems including his sacred epic in four books, the *Dauides*, and his two celebrated Pindaric Odes. He received in 1657 the degree of M.D. at Oxford, and published his Latin poem, *Plantarum*, on the properties of simples. As a Latin poet Dr. Johnson, himself one of the best practical Latinists England can boast, held that Cowley was superior to Milton, though he held Thomas May to be better than either. Upon Cromwell's death Cowley paid a long visit to Paris. At the Restoration, when men who had fought for Cromwell were rewarded for coming over to Charles II., Cowley was denied the Mastership of the Savoy on pretence of "disloyalty," and the Lord Chancellor told him that his pardon was his reward. He was, however, allowed to resume his fellowship. The sum of his offence was that he had lived peaceably under the usurping government, though without having published a word to compromise his original principles. Misanthropy as far as so gentle a nature could cherish it naturally strengthened his love of retirement, and increased that

passion for a country life which breathes in the fancy of his poetry and in the eloquence of his prose. By the influence of Buckingham and St. Albans he proved more successful than Sam Butler, and eventually obtained a competence of about £300 a year upon a lease for life of some of the Queen Mother's dower lands. Unrequited love drove him from Battersea to Barnes, and from Barnes Pope would have us believe to the bottle. He caught his death from lying out (with Dean Sprat) after a carouse. He died at the Porch House, Chertsey, on July 28th, 1667 ("Here the last accents flowed from Cowley's tongue," said an inscription over the door), and was buried with solemnity and six horses in Westminster Abbey, Charles II. declaring that "he had not left behind him a better man in England." His Grace the "Duke of Bucks," Aubrey tells us, condescended to hold a tassel of the pall. "Who now reads Cowley?" wrote Pope sixty years after his predecessor's death. Yet for half that period at least he was not only considered absolutely sure of a place among our classic writers (an opinion in which Milton concurred), but was also one of the most popular of poets. He was rightly considered on the whole as a continuator of the tradition of Donne, but of a Donne, it must be admitted, greatly diluted, while at the same time modernised and French polished. Frost-

work and silver tinsel replace the gold of Pindar and the platinum of the incomparable Dean.

So fragmentary has our knowledge of Cowley's work gradually become that it is hard for us to assign importance to his literary influence. Yet all the short pieces of Cowley that are still in the least familiar, such as the airy and fickle *Chronicle*, in which he relates the quick succession of his short loves, *The Grasshopper*, *The Swallow*, *The Epicure*, and *Drinking* from the Anacreontics, the humorous paraphrase of *The Town and Country Mouse* from Horace's *Satires*, the delicious fragment, "Love in her sunny eyes doth basking play," the dignified *Ode to the Royal Society*, and the favourite *A Wish*, first printed in *Poetical Blossomes* (which subsequently inspired Pomfret's *Choice*, a poem described by Southey as the most popular in the language)—all these bear ample testimony to Cowley's ingenuity, taste, and scholarship. And there is one point at least at which Cowley may be regarded as an innovator. The Pindaric Odes which he professed to imitate from Pindar were probably adopted by him for the exceptional scope which they gave to his fertility in invention, classical imagery and ingenious figures. Cowley was thus responsible for naturalising in England¹ a somewhat frigid and unsatisfying metrical form, and one ex-

¹ Of the other so-called metaphysical poets of Cowley's day we need do little more than mention Henry More and William Chamberlayne. More's philosophical poems containing his *Platonic Song of the Soul* in Spenserian stanzas appeared in 1647; it is a serious attempt by a contemplative collegian of unlimited leisure to turn metaphysics into poetry. William Chamberlayne, a physician of Shaftesbury, who fought on the King's side at the second battle of Newbury, and died at his native place, aged seventy, in 1689, produced in 1659 his long romance of *Pharonnida* in five cantos of heroic verse. The story is extremely complicated, having some affinities with *The Winter's Tale* and some with *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, while at other points it recalls the adventures of Don Juan. But the writer has none of the vigour or the clearness requisite for sustaining the interest of such an intricate narrative. The changes of scene alone between Sicily, Sparta, and Epirus are bewildering in the extreme. The poet studiously avoids adapting the sense to the conformation of the couplet, and thus adds to the rambling effect of a poem which contains detached passages of undoubted beauty. Even longer than the "mammoth" of More and Chamberlayne is the *Psyche*, an allegorical description in twenty cantos of *The Intercourse between Christ and the Soul* (1648) of Dr. Joseph Beaumont, a distant relative of the dramatist, and a close friend at Cambridge of Crashaw. This colossal work in six-line stanzas (of the type favoured by Brooke in his terrible treatises on Monarchy and Humane Learning) forms a kind of link between the metaphysical and ecstatic school of religious poetry and the long set pieces of eighteenth-century didacticism. Pope ascribes to it a great many flowers well worth gathering; "the man who has the art of stealing wisely will find his account on reading it." A more direct disciple of Cowley was Thomas Flatman, of Winchester and New College, a skilful painter of miniatures by profession, though he had been called to the Bar by the Inner Temple. He was a virtuoso in "numbers" and diligently imitated the Pindaric Odes of Cowley, writing similar effusions on "the matchless Orinda," on Monk, on Rupert, and on Charles II. His meditations upon Death led to stronger and more original verses; his songs are irregular, and some of the best, such as his *Advice to an Old Man about to Marry*, exceedingly free. Flatman's flatteries have scarcely succeeded in retrieving "the matchless Orinda" from oblivion. Her poems, commenced in 1651, made up but a slender bundle when collected in 1667, three years after the fair Katherine's death. Of this tear-bottle sentimentalist and Della Cruscan it is safe to say that she would have been long forgotten, but for her melodious name, not Philips, but "the matchless Orinda."

tremely hard to reconcile with the genius of the language. The irregularity of the odes was embraced for different reasons by Dryden and Gray, but its existence was not perhaps fully justified until a good deal later in the hands of Keats, Shelley, and Arnold.

Edmund Waller was born on March 3rd, 1606, at the manor house of Coleshill, a pretty little hamlet two miles from Amersham. His father was an esquire of good family and his mother was John Hampden's aunt. He entered Lincoln's Inn in 1622 after education at Eton and King's, and went into Parliament before he was twenty. In 1631 he made a rich city match, in 1634 his wife died, and Waller, after a year's interval, during which he frequented the society of literary men and acquired literary aspirations, became a suitor to the Lady Dorothea Sidney of Penshurst, whom he eternised in his poems as Sacharissa. His poems to Sacharissa, however, though occasionally pretty, are singularly unemotional, and when she married the Earl of Sunderland a few years later the grief of Waller appears to have been anything but poignant. As cousin of John Hampden and a connection by marriage of Cromwell, Waller had some leanings towards the popular side, but he was at heart a courtier and a conservative; he looked upon things with a carnal eye and only wanted to be left to enjoy his wealth and popularity in peace. But like Sir William Temple he was vain, and he wanted to shine as an orator in the new parliamentary arena.¹ He was veering more and more towards the Royalist side when in February, 1643, he went as a commissioner to treat with the King at Oxford. There in all probability was conceived the plot, afterwards known as Waller's, to secure the City of London for the King. The plot was revealed by a clerk whom the Earl of Manchester had bribed, and in the hope of saving his life Waller disclosed all that he knew about the design. Several of his accomplices were hanged, but Waller himself escaped with the sentence of banishment and a fine of

£10,000. He spent most of his exile in Paris, where he saw much of Evelyn and Hobbes, and had more money to dispense than most of the refugees. He and Evelyn parted in Paris in 1652, and Waller returned home. In 1655 he was made a commissioner of trade and produced an elaborate *Panegyric to my Lord Protector*.

The bold Imperial note which Waller strikes in these verses is repeated more than once, notably in his heroics *Of a War with Spain* and *A Fight at Sea*. In other respects they do little enough to confirm his claim, which badly needs support, to be a powerful innovator and great master of technique in English verse. Posterity, in fact, owes its debt to Edmund Waller, not for his couplets, finely as he wrote these upon one occasion at least, in his swan song, *Of the Last Verses of the Book*, but for his occasional lyrics; no one could improve a trivial occasion much more gracefully than Waller—witness his lines *On a Girdle*, concluding:

Give me what this ribband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round,

and his still more famous *Go, Lovely Rose*. The fragrance of this is indeed exquisite, but the idea is of immemorial antiquity, and has been worked and re-worked. The finest image in Waller is that perhaps in his lines *To a Lady*:

The eagle's fate and mine are one,
Which on the shaft that made him die
Espied a feather of his own
Wherewith he wont to soar so high.

As "the greatest refiner of our English language in poetry," he was held after Cowley's death to dominate the world of wit. In reality he was just as much of a wit as other minor Caroline lyrists, like whom he has left two or three copies of verses, and no more, which posterity will not willingly let die. The difference between him and Lovelace or Suckling amounts to just this, that there is less

¹ He was esteemed as a wit and a "privy mocker." He said he wished he had written the Duchess or Newcastle's verses on the death of a stag: charged with adulation, he explained that nothing was too much to be given that a lady might be saved from the disgrace of such a vile performance. For the Lives of Cowley and Waller, the prime authorities are Wood, Aubrey, Clarendon, and the Diaries of Evelyn and Pepys, and then the two excellent Lives by Dr. Johnson, *Lives of the Poets* (Clarendon Press, 1905, vol. i.). Both Waller and Marvell are well edited in the Muses' Library, and there is a recent Life of Marvell by Augustine Birrell (in the English Men of Letters). A complete Marvell (ed. Grosart) fills 4 vols. in Fuller's *Worthies Library*, 1872. For all three see *Dictionary of National Biography*. There is a good dialogue in Landor, in which Marvell dilates both on Milton and Cromwell. Of Cowley there is an edition in the recent Cambridge English Classics: ed. Waller (1904-5: *Selections*, 1902).

distance between his polished verse that no one now reads, and the few "lucky trifles" that all the world knows. Few poets so essentially superficial have received such an ample recognition from their contemporaries. He died at Hall Barn, Beaconsfield, on October 21st, 1687, and was buried under a pyramidal monument still shaded by a very fine walnut-tree in the churchyard there.¹

Waller's poetical ideal was applause, and he deliberately studied to be correct, modern, and smooth. But the notion that he first successfully trimmed the balance of our heroic couplet is quite preposterous. Thomas Lodge, Marlowe, Drayton, Fairfax (to whom Waller admits a debt), George Sandys, Carew and others, not to mention Shakespeare, had exhibited a mastery over the heroic couplet to which the slower endowment of Waller could never have approximated. Carew, had he lived, would have probably given our poetry an even stronger bias in the same direction. The result of the tendency was first made decidedly manifest after the return of our exiles from France in 1660. Hence a not unnatural inclination to attribute it too exclusively to Cowley and Waller. The growth of poetic diction (so-called), of balanced epithets and a mannered inversion, the further definition of the pause at the end of the line, and the increasing fixity of the rule to complete the sense at the conclusion of the couplet—all this was well adapted to the growing demand of the age for verse satire, through which the old heroic measure was merged by imperceptible degrees into the finished clockwork couplet of the school of Pope.

The number of Waller's imitators and copyists was legion.² Foremost among them stands Sir John Denham (d. 1669, *æt.* 54), the son of an Irish judge, and a long-suffering Royalist, who published his famous descriptive poem, *Cooper's Hill*, as early as 1641, four years before the first collective edition of Waller's poems appeared. But for all that, Denham was as much a deliberate imitator of Waller, and especially Waller's smoothness of versification, as Mason

subsequently was of Gray. It was not until Denham's poems were published in 1655 that the four famous lines were added :

O, could I flow like thee, and make thy stream

My great example, as it is my theme !

Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

Nothing else in the poems, it must be owned, comes up to this fine rhetorical invocation. Johnson describes it as our first topographical poem of importance, strangely overlooking not only Jonson's *Penshurst*, but also Drayton's mammoth *Polyolbion*. Denham's verse is consistently sleek, but he wrote nothing else of interest with the exception of his threnody on Cowley.

Andrew Marvell forms an interesting link between the classical culture of the concettists, the Puritan enthusiasm of Milton, and the satirical energy of Dryden. Marvell was born at Winestead-in-Holderness on March 31st, 1621, and in 1633 gained an exhibition at the Hull Grammar School, and went as a sizar to Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1646 he returned to England after a long sojourn on the Continent ; three years later he addressed some verses to his noble friend, Richard Lovelace ; while in the following year (1650), in a fine Horatian *Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland*, he wrote those touching lines upon Charles's execution which so well sum up the feeling of a scholar and a gentleman, without reference to the particular creed in politics which he might feel called upon to adopt :

He nothing common did, or mean,

Upon that memorable scene ;

But with his keener eye

The axe's edge did try ;

Nor called the gods with vulgar spite

To vindicate his helpless right,

But bowed his comely head

Down, as upon a bed.

At the close of 1650 he went to Nunappleton in Yorkshire as tutor to Lord Fairfax's daughter May. And there, during two happy years, he wrote his longest poem in octosyllabic verse

¹ The walnut, as a recognisance, was an armorial pun ; the name being pronounced Waw-ler.

² Thomas Stanley (d. 1678), a considerable translator, and a patron of still smaller poetical fry, such as Sherburne and Hammond, a close imitator of Waller, exhibited, in his *Original Poems* of 1651 (reprinted by Brydges 1814), verses of great smoothness and no little variety of metre. But they are occasional poems without an occasion upon themes hopelessly worn and conventional. Another poet and essayist upon the fringe of literature at this time was John Hall (1627—1656), of Durham and St. John's, Cambridge, a friend of Hartlib and of Hobbes, who published his *Horæ Vacivæ* or Essays in 1646, and his *Poems* in 1647. Sir Francis Kinaston (1587—1642) shows similar tendencies, as a kind of glorified court-usher of poetry, as Leigh Hunt heartlessly described Waller.

upon Appleton House, and many of his most beautiful pastoral and amorous verses. In the Fairfax garden-croft his muse seemed to bud and blossom like a spring cherry:

What wond'rous life is this I lead!
 Ripe apples drop about my head . . .
 The nectarine and curious peach
 Into my hands themselves do reach. . . .
 Bind me, ye woodbines, in your twines
 Curb me about, ye gadding vines,
 And oh, so close your circles lace
 That I may never leave this place!

In 1653 he returned to London and became a familiar figure at Milton's house in Petty France, and in 1657 he became Milton's colleague in the Latin secretaryship. Next year he wrote his poem on the death of Cromwell, the sincerity of which shines in comparison with the specious eulogies of Dryden and Waller. From 1659 onwards he sat as representative of Hull in Parliament, receiving the still customary payment of six and eightpence per day while Parliament sat. As a member of the House he may have been able to do something to ensure Milton's safety in 1660. By 1667, when he wrote the first of his national satires called *Instructions to a Painter* after the models of Waller and Denham, Marvell had definitely joined the ranks of the opposition. Most of these denouncing satires are of ephemeral interest (except, indeed, to the historian), though they caused Marvell to be regarded by the Tory and High Church party as a very pestilent and dangerous wit who ought to be severely repressed. Marvell died in London on August 16th, 1678, and was buried in St. Giles's-in-the-Fields. His early and non-political poems, written far away from the town and its corruptions, are the most valuable part of his literary legacy. His knowledge of the classics taught him form, while he had much of the grace of Herrick with infinitely more feeling. His country poems—*The Nymph and the Fawn*, *The Songs of the Mower*, *The Garden*, *A Drop of Dew*—are melodious and witty; full, as Charles Lamb said, of a witty delicacy. Their conceits, in fact, serve as real adornments, for under the surface of their quaintness there is a deeper meaning. In the whole compass of our poetry there is nothing quite like the love of gardens, woods, meads, rivers, and birds in Marvell's best octosyllabics, which had a potent influence upon the rhythm of not a few occasional poets in the same *genre*—above all, upon

Charles Lamb. He himself owed to Fletcher, Milton, Herrick, Wither, and Randolph; yet who of these could have written:

Through the hazels thick espy
 The hatching throstle's shining eye?

Such observation was rare among the poets. Though unequal, Marvell is far less so than those typical court poets, Carew, Suckling, and Lovelace. Besides the poems mentioned, his *Coronet*, in which he approaches Crashaw, *Young Love*, *On Paradise Lost*, and the exquisite *Where the Remote Bermudas Ride*—all are regarded with true affection by lovers of poetry.

As a satirist Marvell is brought into the somewhat shady companionship of John Oldham, a native of Tetbury, and a graduate of Oxford (St. Edmund Hall). Oldham became an usher at Croydon, where Rochester and Sedley are said to have visited him, struck perhaps by the regular thwack-thwack of his satirical heroics. He wrote passable imitations of Horace, Juvenal, and Boileau; but his reputation belongs to the episode of the Popish Plot, when his precious couplets against the Jesuits, in describing the sham relics of Rome, are outrageous enough to have been penned by Oates himself. In their uncompromising savagery we recognise a literary progenitor of Charles Churchill. Pope's opinion is worth hearing on the minor Restoration arts and versifiers: "Oldham is a very indelicate writer: he has strong rage but is too much like Billingsgate. Lord Rochester had much more delicacy and more knowledge of mankind." "Rochester," he added, "is the medium between the rough coarseness of Oldham and the delicate exactness of Lord Dorset. Sedley is a very insipid writer: except in some few of his little love verses." This depreciation of Sedley seems beyond the mark when we consider songs such as "Love still has something of the sea," or the more famous:

Phyllis is my only joy,
 Faithless as the winds or seas;
 Sometimes coming, sometimes coy,
 Yet she never fails to please.

But for this we are willing enough to accept Pope's order of merit. It is hard to form a satisfactory estimate of Rochester for the simple reason that many of his cleverest verses are simply unprintable, and this difficulty is complicated by the fact that it is almost im-

possible to identify Rochester's work, if it may so be described, from that of his collaborators, rivals or imitators. Born at Ditchley, Rochester graduated M.A. from Wadham when he was thirteen, and set out upon a tour of foreign courts, during which he studied Alcibiades, Boileau, and Cowley as models. At seventeen he appeared at Charles II.'s court a good-looking, slender boy, precociously sprightly and amusing when sober and extravagantly comical when drunk. His life at the court was a succession of practical jokes, of which the victims varied from the King himself to the harmless city merchant, but Charles could forgive anything rather than spare such an idle rogue from his society. In his last years promiscuous debauchery seems to have given way to habitual intoxication, and Rochester in his penitent state confessed to Burnet that he had been drunk for five years. On his deathbed he ordered his licentious poems to be destroyed, but this naturally was not done, and Rochester is still saddled with many obscenities which he can never have perpetrated. His verses are always described as lewd and profane; but we know of them little more than "Nothing." He died an enfeebled old wreck of thirty-three on July 26th, 1680.¹

Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset, was a more

amiable rake than Rochester. Walpole confirms Pope's view that he was the finest gentleman at the voluptuous court of Charles II., and that he had as much wit as either the King, Buckingham, or Rochester, without the want of feeling of Charles, the want of principle of the Duke, of the "thoughtlessness" (charming euphemism) of the third. He was undoubtedly a munificent patron to Dryden and Prior, and apart from his gay poems to the royal mistresses, for whom he had a particular *tendre*, he wrote at least one masterpiece which far surpasses anything of Rochester's, his *Song written at Sea in the First Dutch War the Night before the Engagement*:

To all you ladies now on land
We men at sea indite:
But first would have you understand
How hard it is to write.

But each one of the eleven stanzas of this sprightly gaiety is a gem. Dorset is also responsible for the happy literary application of the Shakespearean phrase "alacrity in sinking." "Gay, vigorous, and airy" Dorset grew fat, and according to Swift dull, when he reached sixty. He died at Bath on January 29th, 1706. Sedley and Dorset passed on the *tibia* to Prior, who was the last to sound it for well-nigh a hundred years.²

¹ There is a good deal of libertine verse, some of it, no doubt, by Rochester, in the collection known as *Poems on Affairs of State*. See also Bullen's *Musa Proterva*, *Rochester and the Rakes*, Rutherford's *Singular Life of the Renowned Earl*, Aubrey, Dr. Johnson, and the excellent memoir in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. A pretty selection of *Lyrics of the Restoration* has appeared in *The Chap-books* (ed. Masefield, 1905).

² Westminster School, under James I. and Charles I., must have been a veritable nest of singing birds, with every variety of note and utterance. In addition to three poets who achieved so much as George Herbert, Herrick, and Cowley, the school was the cradle of two singers of such promise as Cartwright and Randolph, and of a great host of minor versifiers such as William Strode (1602—1645), author of *The Floating Island*, and of a pretty kissing song; Henry King (d. 1669), Bishop of Chichester, author of devotional poems not without merit; Jasper Mayne (d. 1672), a priestly playwright of no scruples worth speaking of, and an adept translator of Lucian; Nicholas Hookes (d. 1712), author of *Amanda*; and several others. William Cartwright, a young person of the humblest origin, passed from Westminster to Christ Church an accepted paragon and particular wit, and his early death, it was said of camp fever, in 1643 was felt as a blow by many, even in that short-lived generation. Among his *Poems and Plays* collected in 1651 we find nothing save an indifferent play called *The Ordinary*, nor can we expect his *Poemata Græca et Latina* to supply the key to this riddle of his fame. Even younger was nipped Thomas Randolph (1605—1635), who went from the school to Trinity, Cambridge. Inspired by a furtive glimpse of Jonson in the Devil Tavern, he drank too greedily, we are told, of the Muses' Spring. So may it be. His plays are in the dust with Davenant's, Nabbes's, and Brome's, but there are some pastoral blossoms among his heroic and other verses, and one phrase, "blithe, buxom, and debonaire," which Milton himself condescended to improve.

Charles Cotton (d. 1687), the unsurpassed translator of Montaigne, left a few copies of verse not on any account to be forgotten. Angler ("a dog at a catch"), wit, traveller, and toss-pot, he was a benefactor of poor bards, such as Lovelace, and a bright exemplar of all-round talent. His *Poems on Several Occasions* (1639) contain *Winter* ("Hark! Hark! I hear the north wind roar") and the sunny *Retirement*. Honest, hearty Mr. Cotton has always been a favourite—Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Lamb unite in calling Cotton "a first-rate." Charles Cotton's *Voyage to Ireland in Burlesque* (1671), which has been claimed as anticipating the *Bath Guide* of Anstey, owed something, no doubt, to the facetious rhyming *Journal* (1638) of "Drunken Barnabee" or Richard Brathwait (d. May 4th, 1673, æt. 85), and to the more sprightly humours of Bishop Corbet's *Iter Boreale*.

CHAPTER VII

FROM THIS WORLD TO THE NEXT: JOHN BUNYAN

"A curious writer is Bunyan. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a nursery tale, a blood-curdling allegory, showing the terrible inner mind of one of those fanatics; groans, invasions of the spirit, the belief in damnation, visions of the devil's scruples. Oh! Pray do not turn us into Protestants; let us remain Voltaireans and Spinozists! After the hallucination is calmed down, a sort of rigidity remains, moral spikes with which to wound oneself continually and stab others."—Taine, *Letters*.

"The whole allegory is a consistent attack on morality and respectability."—Shaw, *Man and Superman*.

The Pilgrim's Progress and its creator.¹

IF Milton represented cultivated Puritanism, the everyday faith of the humble Christian in seventeenth-century England, the class who set out to colonise the backwoods of America is represented by John Bunyan, the most popular religious writer that England has ever produced. The greatness of Milton resides largely in the complexity of his endowment and the scholarly elaboration of his talent; that of Bunyan, on the other hand, depends upon the simplicity of his mind and the devotion of his nature to one single idea. He was a pilgrim in his deeds as well as his words, and his particular other-worldliness exactly appealed to the religious cravings of the English Protestant, who had abandoned the ideas of sacramental grace and purgatory, and wanted something definite in their stead. Two generations had elapsed since the Reformation had formally taken place, and the current of time had brought a generation of Englishmen far more religious than our country had seen for at least four hundred years. But these men were religious in a narrow, exclusive, and intensely individual way. Their historical philosophy was based on two books, the Bible and Foxe, of the literal veracity of which they were implicitly assured. In all these men, represented by such types as Bunyan, Peters, Roger Williams, Winthrop, Baxter, and many others, the fear of God was developed to an extent of which the phrase as used at the present day and fatigued by

centuries of unmeaning use can give not the very slightest conception. How to escape the ban of sin, how to flee from the wrath to come, if the sacraments were no good—this was the prime concern of every one of them. The method by which this can be done was shown by Bunyan in his all-famous allegory. He knew by bitter experience. And the conviction of sin and the cruel weight of the Burden, the agonising query, What shall I do to be saved? the revelation of the wicket-gate of conversion by which the narrow way alone may be entered, the deliverance from the load of sin through the agency of the Cross—these personal phases of suffering and delivery explain the various steps by which the sinner may come to benefit by the atonement.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow, a village near Bedford, where his father mended pots and kettles, in 1628. He learned the elements at Bedford Grammar School; and before he was seventeen was drafted into the Parliamentary army, and served for a year or so under Sir Samuel Luke, who was Cromwell's scout-master for the county of Bedford; but he makes no reference whatever to his own military exploits, the recollection of which can hardly have been congenial to him. In 1647 he returned to his tinker's work at Elstow much as he had left it. "Two years later," he says, "I lighted on a wife whose father was counted godly. We came together as poor as might be, not having

¹ The best introduction to *The Pilgrim's Progress* is supplied by its author's own *Grace Abounding*. The best Life of Bunyan is that of Dr. John Brown, and the best cheap modern edition that edited by Prof. C. H. Firth (Methuen, 1898). Among famous illustrators are John Martin and Sir John Gilbert. And in recent literature the reader should not fail to notice the appreciation of Bernard Shaw in the Preface to *Man and Superman* or the respectable solicitor's unbiassed summing-up of Christian's harebrained enterprise in *Henry Brocken*.

so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon between us. But she had for her portion two books, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practise of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I sometimes read with her." On his marriage he became regular and respectable in his habits. "I fell in," he says, "with the religion of the times—to go to church twice a day, very devoutly to say and sing as the others did, yet retaining my wicked life." By this wicked life he means not so much the lying and swearing at which he professes that he excelled as a boy, but merely an indulgence in amusements and Sunday sports, and an indifference to the Bible and to the mysteries of religion. But his conscience was from the first extraordinarily sensitive, and even as a boy he was haunted by visions of hell, by spectres, hobgoblins, and dreams.

The next years of Bunyan's life are in the account he has given us of his own struggles in the book called *Grace Abounding*, a history of his own panic fear of the wrath to come. He went about with the book in his hand, saying to himself, "What shall I do to be saved?" Of his material progress during the Commonwealth he tells us practically nothing, though it is clear that he must have been a successful trader, in the same fraternity as Izaak Walton, and for aught we know he may have been as shrewd a dealer in his way as either Franklin or Cobbett. But what is certain is that Bunyan regarded all such matters as wholly unimportant as compared with the salvation of his soul. He heard voices saying continually unto him, "Sell Christ for this or that." He tortured himself into the belief that he had committed the unpardonable sin, the sin of Judas, and he was for a long time in the pitiable condition of the Welsh minister so powerfully described by Borrow in *Lavengro*. Giant Despair had blinded the unhappy man, and he was for a long time groping among the tombs. Deliverance came appropriately in the form of an illusion—the hobgoblins and devils that had tormented him being replaced by voices from heaven. Conversion was followed by baptism in the Ouse, by admission to the Baptist community, by an illness, and by a calm. In 1655 he was called upon to take part in the "ministry." He was modest, humble, shrinking. The minister when he preached was, according to the theory, an instrument uttering the words not of himself but of the Holy Spirit.

A man like Bunyan, who really believed this, might well be alarmed. After earnest entreaty, however, he made "experiment of his powers" in private, and it was at once evident that, with the thing which these people meant by inspiration, he was abundantly supplied. No such preacher to the uneducated English masses was to be found within the four seas. He was a man of natural genius, who believed the Protestant form of Christianity to be completely true. He knew nothing of philosophy, nothing of history, nothing of literature. But his humour, his modesty, and his real greatness as a preacher are shown alike in the well-known story of his descent from the pulpit after a great effort. "Oh, master Bunyan," said a grateful elder in his congregation, "that was a sweet sermon." "You need not tell me that," said Bunyan, "the Devil whispered it to me before I was well out of the pulpit."

After the Restoration, the Anglican clergy, who had been as "partridges on the mountains," returned to their pulpits, and it became the turn of the conventicles to undergo persecution. The Act of Conformity made no distinction between aggressive and unaggressive sects such as the Baptists; and the magistrates at Bedford were compelled, however reluctantly, to arrest and imprison Bunyan as an unlicensed preacher. There seems to have been no kind of animus against him, and he could have got out of prison at any time by giving an undertaking not to preach in public. But this stipulation he found it out of his power to make, and the result was that he remained on in the county gaol from 1660 to 1672. Bunyan's detention for such a long period was evidently of an irregular kind. Such irregularities were common enough before the passing of the Habeas Corpus Act in 1679. It is probable that he was treated on the whole in a very lenient manner. In the first year of his imprisonment he is known to have made a visit to London. He was allowed to receive the visits of his friends, to receive comforts from without, and to exhort his fellow-sufferers in the gaol, where he helped to support himself by making tag-laces. His four young children were looked after by the devoted woman whom he had married in 1659, within a year of the great loss sustained by the death of the wife of his youth. There is little doubt that the confinement of gaol considerably stimulated his powers of composition; his library there was select, consisting of the Bible and *The Book of*

Martyrs. The first of his prison-books, as they are called, was a verse dialogue called *Profitable Meditations*, printed in 1661; *The Holy City*, an expansion of a prison sermon, followed in 1665; and his famous autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, or A Brief and Faithful Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to his Poor Servant John Bunyan*, in eight sheets, 12mo, 1666. In the early summer of 1672 his release was procured under the Act of Indulgence, and he began preaching regularly in a barn in an orchard which stood between Castle and Mill Lane. But in 1675 his licence as a preacher was revoked, and Bunyan, once more informed against, was sent this time to the town prison or "den" on Bedford Bridge, which had recently been repaired after the damage sustained by the floods in 1671, and which was finally taken down in 1765. Here he wrote the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress* down to the parting of Christian and Hopeful with the shepherds on the Delectable Mountains, which Bunyan concludes with the words, "So I awoke from my dream." Bunyan was forty-seven at the time. He was writing, as usual, strictly to improve the occasion, and fell into the allegory unawares. His final imprisonment seems to have lasted only until the early months of 1676, and in 1677 Bunyan took the completed allegory (which had ended by wholly devouring the discourse) to London for publication, and it was published at 1s. 6d. in March, 1678. Some characteristic additions were made in the second edition of 1679, in which Mr. Worldly Wiseman appeared for the first time. The second part did not appear until January, 1685. The realistic *Life and Death of Mr. Badman* was presented to the world in 1680 in the form of a dialogue between Mr. Wiseman and Mr. Attentive, after the manner of Dent's *Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*. It is the story of a predestinate rascal with a moral intention at least as clear as that in Hogarth's "Idle Apprentice," but its general plausibility is much stronger, and it has much of the realistic power of Defoe.

The next two years were occupied by Bunyan in writing his second great allegory, *The Holy War*, which was published in 1682. The story of his remaining years is briefly told. He lived at a small house in St. Cuthbert's parish, Bedford, in easy circumstances, greatly respected by all the Dissenters of the neighbourhood. His fame as a preacher and as author of *The*

Pilgrim's Progress spread abroad. Annually he visited London to preach to the Baptist churches in Pinner's Hall. It was on one of his visits to London, while staying at the house of John Strudwick on Snow Hill, that he was seized with a fever, and died on Friday, August 31st, 1688. On the following Monday he was buried in Strudwick's vault in Bunhill Fields, where a monument was placed over his tomb in 1861.

In the tribe of literature to which it belongs—that of the allegory or drawn-out fable—*Pilgrim's Progress* stands first. It has no rival either in success or popularity: witness the eighty translations which it has undergone in the various languages and dialects of the human speech. Satire in the guise of travel, inculcation of moral truth in allegorical form, had been attempted frequently in the world of letters from Lucian to Spenser; but such models had no existence as far as John Bunyan was concerned. The Bible was to him not only his book; it was his library as much as was the Koran to the most bigoted of Mohammedans.

What distinguishes *The Pilgrim's Progress* from all other allegories is the fact that the outward story and the inward experience which it portrays are absolutely one. The child can read it with delight for the story alone, the mature reader can cross the line as often as he likes between the fable and the moral. The application is so direct that he can never be at a loss as to the bearing of an incident; at every turn he can recognise familiar footprints. The carnal man and the Christian believer are equally fascinated by the dogged valour of the Puritan sergeant, a reminiscence, it may be, of 1645.

There is no subtlety, no ambiguity about the moral, the clearness and directness of which are as unmistakable as that of the narrative in *Robinson Crusoe*. From this unity and perspicuity in Bunyan's work comes the unique result that he made the abstract as palatable as the concrete. The mould of style into which the allegory is thrown is one as durable as that of our English Bible, and one even more impervious to time, for after the lapse of two hundred years there are practically no obsolete words in Bunyan. The characters in that company of his, so like and so unlike Chaucer's, were evidently drawn from life,—eternal figures in the human comedy. His *Progress* is a perfect reflection of the Scripture with none of the rubbish of the theologians mixed up with it.

CHAPTER VIII

ENGLAND'S SECOND POET: "SHAKESPEARE FIRST, AND NEXT—MILTON"

"This man cuts us all out and the ancients too."—DRYDEN.

"The natural expression of a soul exquisitely nourished upon the best thoughts and finest words of all ages. . . . An appreciation of Milton is the last reward of consummated scholarship."—MARK PATTISON.

"I had thought of the *Lycidas* as of a full-grown beauty—as springing up with all its parts absolute—till, in an evil hour, I was shown the original copy of it, together with the other minor poems of the author in the library of Trinity, kept like some treasure to be proud of. I wish they had thrown them in the Cam, or sent them after the later cantos of Spenser into the Irish Channel. How it staggered me to see the fine things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! As if they might have been otherwise and just as good! As if inspiration were made up of parts, and these fluctuating, successive, indifferent! I will never go into the workshop of any great artist again."

—CHARLES LAMB.

Early life—Italian travel—Pedagogy and prose—Retirement—Chalfont—Completion of *Paradise Lost*—Last years—Critical estimate—Bibliography.

JOHN MILTON was born over his father's shop in Bread Street, London, on December 9th, 1608. His father, a scrivener, a native of Halton in Oxfordshire, about one year older than Shakespeare, prospered rapidly in London from 1603 onwards at the sign of the Spread Eagle in Bread Street. He married about 1600 and had six children, three of whom, a daughter Anne and two sons, John and Christopher, survived infancy. Anne married Edward Phillips and became the mother of Edward and John Phillips, the well-known poetasters and scribblers. Christopher, who was born in 1615 and was called to the Bar in 1639, adhered as the law taught him, to the King's party. He studied the law, says Johnson, and was a strong Royalist, and in James II.'s reign professed Catholicism and was accordingly raised to the judicial bench and knighted, though his legal capacity is said to have been small. The poet's father, apart from possessing the knack of making money, was a man of refinement and cultivation. He was not only a connoisseur of music but also a composer of some merit. When his elder son was a beautiful boy of ten he had him painted by the Dutch portrait-painter Jansen. "My father," says the poet, "destined me while yet a little child for the study of humane

letters. Both at the grammar school and under other masters at home, he caused me to be instructed daily." Among his private tutors was Thomas Young, a well-known Scots Presbyterian divine. Young left England early in 1622 and before that date Milton became a scholar at St. Paul's School under Alexander Gill, successor to the eminent Richard Mulcaster.

Before his school-days were over, he had learnt to read French and Italian and something of Hebrew, in addition to Greek and Latin. In English literature two of his favourite books are known to have been Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas. The influence of Sylvester is apparent in paraphrases of Psalms 114 and 126, written by Milton at the age of fifteen. Marlowe, Jonson, and Shakespeare he doubtless read in first editions, as one poet reads another. His closest friend at school appears to have been Charles Diodati, the son of an Italian doctor who had settled in England. Diodati entered Trinity College, Oxford, in February, 1623, and two years later Milton was admitted at Christ's College, Cambridge. During the first three years of his sojourn at college Milton's severe and ascetic habits seem to have rendered him somewhat unpopular, and he clearly had a quarrel of some

kind with his first tutor, William Chappell. "I am ashamed to relate what I fear is true," writes Johnson, on the authority of Aubrey, "that Milton was one of the last students in either university that suffered the public indignity of corporal correction." There is a tradition that he was called "the lady" in his college, where his rooms are recognised to this day on the first floor of the western staircase on the north side of the great court, and where the mulberry-tree that he planted in the college garden is still pointed out to credulous and incredulous visitors. While at college he corresponded in Latin with Young, Diodati, and the younger Gill. He also wrote academical verses and orations, while among the English verses of this period are the "epitaph" on Shakespeare, the sonnet "On having arrived at the age of twenty-three," the would-be humorous epitaph upon the death of the university carrier, Thomas Hobson, an epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, and the noble *Ode on the Nativity* of Christmas, 1629. He spoke with great contempt of the academic drama and of the philosophic curriculum of Cambridge. As in the case of Wordsworth, his attitude towards the scheme of university education was almost uniformly critical. When he finally left Cambridge in July, 1632, he was four months short of twenty-four years of age. According to Aubrey, he was a little under the middle height, of fair complexion, with a delicate oval face, dark grey eyes and light brown hair. His mental and moral attitude at this period is thus summed up by Sir Leslie Stephen:

"Although respected by the authorities, his proud and austere character probably kept him aloof from much of the coarser society of the place. He shared the growing aversion to the scholasticism against which one of his exercises is directed. Like Henry More, who entered Christ's in Milton's last year, he was strongly attracted by Plato, although he was never so much a philosopher as a poet. He already considered himself as dedicated to the utterance of great thoughts, and to the strictest chastity and self-respect, on the ground

that he who would 'write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem.'"

On leaving Cambridge, having taken the degree of M.A. in 1632, Milton went to live again under his father's roof and spent nearly six years at the country residence to which his father had retired to pass his old age, at Horton near Colnbrook, on the old coach road between London and Reading. The first two years and a half of his residence at Horton (1632-4) form the period of the composition of his *Sonnet to the Nightingale*, his *L'Allegro* and *Penseroso*, his *Arcades*, and his *Comus*. At Horton the poet's mother, Sarah Milton, died on April 3rd, 1637. In November of this year he wrote the monody of *Lycidas*, one of the thirty-six pieces—twenty-three in Latin and Greek, thirteen in English—published at Cambridge early in 1638 as *Obsequies to the Memorie of Mr. Edward King*, a wit and scholar who had for eleven years been one of the ornaments of the university.¹

In the spring of 1638 Milton obtained his father's unwilling consent to a journey on the Continent, though the travelling expenses of the poet and his servant, which the old man had to defray, must have cost him fully 20 guineas a month. The poet's departure was marked by a letter full of the kindest advice from the veteran Sir Henry Wotton. In it he referred to the Doric delicacy of Milton's songs and odes, which ravished him beyond anything in our language, sent him a letter of introduction to Lord Scudamore at Paris, and commended to him as a rule for his demeanour abroad the Italian saw *Pensieri stretti ed il viso sciolto* (Thoughts close, looks loose). At Paris in May he was most courteously received by Lord Scudamore, who introduced him to the learned Hugo Grotius, the greatest of living Dutchmen. He entered Italy at Nice and took shipping thence to Genoa and Leghorn. From Leghorn he proceeded by way of Pisa to Florence, where he stayed until the middle of September. At Florence he was hospitably received by Jacopo Gaddi, Carlo Dati, Agostino Coltellini, and others, and contributed some Latin compositions

¹ *Lycidas* is primarily an allegoric pastoral, into the texture of which all that is most beautiful and most significant in pastoral verse seems marvellously condensed; but it contains one passage of stern censure against the unspiritual clergy at the time which is strikingly anticipatory of the later Milton. This intention is clearly marked in the note which he wrote upon the republication of the poem with his full name in 1645: "In this monody the author bewails a learned friend unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy."



After a Miniature by Faithorne.

John Milton

to the transactions of their private academies. Near Florence too, at Arcetri, he visited the famous Galileo, "grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." From Florence he went by Siena to Rome, where he spent most of October and November. There he was introduced to Lucas Holstenius, secretary to Cardinal Barberini, and one of the librarians of the Vatican. In November he went on to Naples, where Manso, Marquis of Villa, a patron and biographer of Tasso, conferred on him many acts of courtesy.

Milton appears to have been desirous of crossing into Sicily and Greece. "But," he says, "the sad news of civil war coming from England called me back. For I considered it disgraceful that while my fellow-countrymen were fighting at home for liberty, I should be travelling abroad at ease for intellectual purposes." At the close of 1638, therefore, he started back, travelling leisurely by Florence to Venice, where he shipped for England a number of books collected during his Italian tour. He proceeded by Verona, Milan, and the Pennine Alps to Geneva. There he met Giovanni Diodati and received a confirmation of the sad news of the death of the doctor's nephew, his old schoolfellow. A noble tribute to the one intimate friendship of his youth was the *Epitaphium Damonis*, composed in Latin hexameters shortly after his return. It is modelled on Virgil's bucolic, Milton as the shepherd Thyrsis bewailing the death of his friend. In August, 1639, he crossed the Channel and returned to London, first to a lodging, and then to a pretty garden house in Aldersgate Street, at that time one of the quietest in London, where he took pupils, the first of these being Edward and John Phillips, the fatherless sons of his only sister Anne. He was already meditating a great moral and religious epic, and about 1642 he sketched out an heroic poem on *King Arthur* and a tragedy on *Paradise Lost*. During 1641-2, in five vehement tracts, which fluctuate in style between dignified eloquence and savage invective, he threw himself into the pamphlet war then raging against prelacy. In May, 1643, Milton made an expedition into the heart of the Royalist district of Oxfordshire and returned with a wife, Mary Powell, the daughter of a jovial yeoman and cavalier of Shotover who

seems to have owed Milton a considerable sum of money. Very soon after the marriage, Milton began his famous book on divorce; even before this, his bride seems to have found the studious life profoundly uncongenial. She was barely eighteen at the time of the marriage, and after a month of married life she returned to the open-air freedom of her father's house. She had been a Royalist, and, says Aubrey, "two opinions do not well on the same bolster"; she had lived where there was a great deal of company and merriment "enviored by the sons of Mars," and when she came to live with her husband she found it very solitary; no company save that of the pupils whom she often overheard being whipped. This was the end of June, 1643, and in little more than a month from this time appeared Milton's pamphlet on divorce. Milton took exactly the same view of his difficulties as Henry VIII.; he was not responsible in any way for the awkward position in which the "cursed spite" of matrimony had placed him, and from which he loudly demanded that the law should release him. The view that he took—namely, that no obstacle should be put in the way of a husband's obtaining a divorce on the ground of incompatibility of temper—led to the book being proscribed. Milton followed it up with several pamphlets which he issued without licence. Various steps were taken to suppress these pamphlets and a new ordinance passed (1644) to give more stringency to the licensing regulations. Upon this Milton wrote his *Areopagitica*, the most noted of his prose works, in defence of a more extended liberty of the press.

About this time he seems to have had the idea of translating into practice his somewhat oriental precepts on the subject of divorce, and cast his eye on the handsome and witty daughter of a Dr. Davis; she, however, was "averse to this motion." Meanwhile the ruin of the royal cause had brought the Powells into distress, and they wished to restore to Milton his actual wife. She was unexpectedly introduced to him while he was on a visit, and, after begging pardon upon her knees, was somewhat grudgingly received back into favour. Their household was now removed to the Barbican, where there was more room for the now increasing pupils, and there were born Milton's three daughters, Anne, Mary, and Deborah (1646, 1648, 1652), and a son John, who died in infancy. His wife, Mary Milton, died in the summer of 1652. His

wife's relatives maintained that Milton behaved harshly to them after the loss of their property, but this charge is not supported by an impartial consideration of the evidence. The poet's father died in March, 1647, whereupon Milton, who thereby inherited a competence, moved to a small house in High Holborn opening at the back into Lincoln's Inn Fields, and gave up teaching. During the following year he was engaged in compiling his *History of Britain*, and in March, 1649, after his vindication of the right of the people to judge their rulers in his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, he was invited by the Council of State to become their Latin secretary at a salary of 15*s.* 10½*d.* a day. His chief duty was to translate foreign despatches into dignified Latin. He was also the chief intermediary between the Government and the press, and was expected to answer any detractors of the Government who succeeded in making their voices heard. In this capacity he wrote *Eikonoklastes* (in answer to *Eikon Basilike*), and his *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*.¹ Milton's final contribution to this deplorable controversy, in which he lost both his temper and his eyesight, and in which he destroyed the character of several authors who were really quite free from complicity in the squabble, was the *Pro se Defensio* (August, 1655). Some years before this he had moved from chambers allowed him in Whitehall to a pretty garden house in Petty France, Westminster. His duties and his salary were somewhat restricted in consequence of his blindness, yet he remained in the service of the Council, being assisted from 1657 onwards by the poet Andrew Marvell. After Cromwell's death he inclined towards the old exclusive republican party, and wrote several pamphlets. In the summer of 1660 his hiding-place was discovered, and he was committed to prison for a few months, but released in the course of December, 1660, upon the payment of fees, through the influence of Sir William Davenant, whom he had previously befriended, and a few friends in the House of Commons. He seems to have lost a good sum of money, owing chiefly to the

disastrous turn given to his investments by political events; and his income was reduced from between £500 and £600 a year to perhaps a third of that sum. His second wife, Catherine Woodcock, had died in 1658, and he married a third, Elizabeth Minshull, early in 1663.

Soon after his third marriage, Thomas Elwood, the Quaker, was recommended to Milton as a person who, for the advantage of his conversation, would read to him such Latin books as he thought proper. For this purpose Elwood attended him every afternoon except on Sundays, and acquired for his benefit the foreign pronunciation of Latin. "Milton," says Elwood, "perceiving with what earnest desire I pursued learning, gave me not only all the encouragement but all the help he could; for having a curious ear he understood by my tone when I understood what I read and when I did not; and accordingly he would stop me and examine me, and open the most difficult passages to me." By 1664 Milton was settled in his last house in Artillery Walk, leading to Bunhill Fields, and was busied upon his *Paradise Lost*. At this time his house is said to have been the resort of foreigners, his celebrity being more active on the Continent than in England, the English, as Littleton remarks, being apt to see no good in a man whose politics they dislike. We have a picture of Milton at this time, retaining to an unusual extent the figure, the tunable voice, and the fair countenance of his early manhood. A casual glance at his grey eyes was not sufficient to reveal their loss of sight. Until his latest years he habitually wore a sword, and his gait was erect and manly. One Dr. Wright, a parson of Dorset, describes him sitting in an elbow chair, in a small chamber hung with rusty green, dressed neatly in black, pale but not cadaverous, with chalk stones in his hands. He was wont to say that, were it not for the gout, his blindness would be tolerable. He used also to sit in a coarse grey cloth coat at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, in warm sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air, and so, as well as in his room, received the visits of his admirers.²

¹ In answer to the *Defensio Regio* of the learned Salmasius. He had to follow this up with the *Defensio Secunda*, full of autobiographical interest, though often descending to scurrilous personal abuse.

² "His domestick habits were those of a sober and temperate student. Of wine or of any strong liquors he drank little. In his diet he was rarely influenced by delicacy of choice. He once delighted in walking and using exercise, and appears to have amused himself in botanical pursuits; but after he was confined by age and blindness he had a machine to swing in for the preservation of his health. In summer he then rested in bed

During the Plague year Milton retired to a "pretty box" which Elwood had taken for him at Chalfont St. Giles, in Buckinghamshire. It was there that one day Milton handed to him the complete manuscript of *Paradise Lost*. "Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost," the Quaker observed; "but what has thou to say of Paradise found?"

Paradise Lost, a poem written in ten books by John Milton, was published in 1667. The first edition was sold out in the course of eighteen months, whereupon Milton received the sum of £10. Three thousand copies were disposed of in the course of a little over ten years. In 1680 Milton's widow sold her contingent rights for £8. Milton's *History of Britain* was published in 1670; and *Paradise Regained*, a poem in four books, to which is added *Samson Agonistes*, appeared in 1671. He could not bear, Elwood tells us, to hear *Paradise Lost* preferred to *Paradise Regained*. By this time Milton's health was declining, and his domestic life appears to have been disturbed. His daughters complained of the servitude of reading books in various languages to their father without knowing the meaning. "In the scene of misery which this mode of intellectual labour sets before our eyes," says Johnson, "it is hard to determine whether the daughters or the father are most to be lamented." Such a trial of patience gradually became beyond endurance, and about 1670 the daughters were all sent out to learn such curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture as are proper for women,

especially embroidery in gold and silver. In the last two years of his life Milton sent to press his little *Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and the Best Means to Prevent the Growth of Popery*, and a volume of familiar epistles in Latin, to which are added some of his Cambridge prolusions. He remained the severe scholar until the end of his life, rising between four and five and studying regularly until noon. He had long been a sufferer from the gout, and in July, 1674, he felt his end to be approaching. He died eventually of gout struck in on Sunday, November 8th, 1674, so peacefully that the time of death was not perceived. He was buried on the 12th in St. Giles's, Cripplegate (the historic old church menaced twice by fire in 1666 and 1897, and still suffering by "restoration"), near his father and the historian, John Speed.¹ The Anglican service was performed over him. For some years before his death he had attended no kind of religious worship. His treatise on Christian doctrine, discovered many years later, and first published in 1823, served to show how far he had travelled from the Calvinism of his early youth. In matters of Church government he had come round to be almost an Arminian, while his religious views as a whole are verging towards pantheism, and he propounds anomalous theories of polygamy and divorce. He had quite discarded the Sabbatarian strictness of a Puritan, and unmercifully satirised the sermons by which his contemporaries set such store.²

from nine to four, in winter to five. If, at these hours, he was not disposed to rise, he had a person by his bedside to read to him. When he first rose he heard a chapter in the Hebrew Bible, and commonly studied till twelve, then dined; afterwards played on the organ or bass-viol, and either sung himself or made his wife sing, who, he said, had a good voice but no ear." It is related that, when educating his nephews, "he had made them songsters, and sing from the time they were with him." No poet, it may be observed, has more frequently or more powerfully commended the charms of music than Milton. He wished, perhaps, to rival, and he has successfully rivalled, the sweetest description of a favourite bard, whom the melting voice appears to have often enchanted—the tender Petrarch. After his regular indulgence in musical relaxation he studied till six, then entertained his visitors till eight; then enjoyed a light supper, and after a pipe of tobacco and a glass of water retired to bed.

¹ John Foxe and Frobisher are buried in this church, where Ben Jonson and Oliver Cromwell were married. A monument was erected to Milton by Sam Whitbread, the brewer. Quite recently a bronze statue has been erected in the yard. His death took place at his house, Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields.

² Johnson found compensation for these eccentricities and for his neglect of family prayer in his continued veneration for the Holy Scriptures. Towards his political constancy he is less charitable: "Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of control, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the State and prelates in the Church, for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It has been observed that they who most loudly clamour for liberty do not most liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character and domestic relations is that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women, and there appears in his book something like a Turkish contempt of females as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion."

The same voice, as vague and as illimitable as the murmur of the ocean, that has placed Shakespeare first among our poets has placed Milton second. By his adaptation of classical form to biblical materials, an adaptation in which the genius of pagan art is blended with the genius of a Puritan Christianity, and in which the stately severity of the Latin form and tongue is harmonised with the multitudinous vocabulary and the breathing tone and accent of our northern speech; by the encyclopædic learning which he has wedded to the most subtle and melodious art—an art which must live as long as the language to which it has afforded some of the supremest figures of speech—Milton has created for himself a monument which seems impervious alike to the gusts of popular prejudice, and to the light winds and chilling damps of critical fervour or depreciation. As of Shakespeare, it may

be said there can be only one Milton! Not that time has done aught to bridge the mighty gulf that yawns between these two men of genius, so alien in well-nigh everything but dwelling-place and nationality. Shakespeare is loved and laughed over even more than he is revered. We may be permitted to compare his fame to Westminster Abbey—a national memorial, the pride of the whole English-speaking world, as dear to the most secular as to the most religious minded of Englishmen, dedicated to St. Peter, yet catholic only in the sense of universal. Milton's poetry and poetic fame, on the other hand, may be compared to St. Paul's, incidentally a religious structure, primarily a great Renaissance temple; second, in a way in point of definite rank, among the churches of the Empire, but far from sharing either the prestige or the love by which all men are drawn to the old foundation as to the magnetic pole.

It is interesting enough to follow Milton's career by means of the ordinary signposts—marriages and issue, employments, migrations, and friendships. We have traced his movements even from one house in London to another. Yet few men lived less within the four walls of a material dwelling than Milton. His life was the abstracted existence of the pure scholar. He lived in his ideas, his books, his thoughts, his art. His life was one long progress in intellectual egotism, the stages of which were marked, not by possessions and actions, but by the march of mind. Milton's scholarly arrogance and contempt for the vulgar was profound. His egotism is redeemed, however, by the fact that there was nothing sordid about it: the things of the intellect were the only things he coveted or really cared for. The world, he thought, should be governed by men of mind, by an intellectual oligarchy of Miltons. Their power was to be absolute, and was to last for life. A worse form of tyranny could not perhaps easily be devised. But Milton's relation to politics was absolutely theoretical from first to last, and, in the few cases in which he realised them, he was totally out of sympathy with the ideas, needs, and feelings of his fellow-countrymen. Holding the views that he did as to the sacredness of the Bible, and having passed through the classical training he had, it was perfectly natural that he should take the views that he did, and should have thrown in his lot with the Puritan oligarchy. He hated the crown and the prelate in the first place for having stifled the Reformation, the blaze of Wyclif, at which all succeeding reformers had lighted their tapers. To his mind, too, as lucid, logical, and positive as that of a Frenchman, there was something essentially degrading about the flunkeyism of a court, with its cringing and servile crew "not of servants only, but of nobility and gentry, bred up to the hopes not of public but of court offices, to be stewards, chamberlains, ushers, grooms even of the close-stool." Ignoring both the historical interest and symbolical value of the crown, ignoring, too, the immense services which it had performed for England (his historical sense was slight), Milton simply saw in the pretension of one man to be the object of adoration to his fellows a position offensive not only to taste and reason, but also to common sense and decency. "All ingenious and knowing men will easily agree with me that a free commonwealth without single persons or House of Lords is by far the best government." From an early period this was his conviction—that of a confirmed *intellectual*. He was so interested in expressing his anti-prelatical views *apropos* of the intensely interesting political situation in 1641-2, that he turned aside from his studies, and wrote those tracts on Reformation against Prelaty, which contain the most impassioned of his prose writings. His next group of tracts on Divorce (1643-5) was prompted by more personal considerations. Irritated by the contiguity of a wife of incompatible temperament, Milton set about, by his usual scholarly methods, to show the desirability of a facile divorce. He was soon convinced that he was absolutely in the right, and as usual resented opposition with the full bitterness of the unbending doctrinaire. He published these tracts without the necessary licence, and the opposition of the Stationers' Company to such "unlicensed printing" occasioned his famous defence of such a practice in his *Areopagitica*. The immediate stimulus, again, was a personal one. He admits the desirability of stifling bad books, until the risk that such a process might involve—namely, the suppression of his own views as to the need of extending divorce facilities—appeared to him greater than the evil it was intended to remedy—"As good almost kill a man as kill a book." He now shows it to be a Popish practice (Galileo), this trying to crush a man's opinion, and a thing essentially unmanly to try and protect a man from every contact with danger or vice. And then comes



From the Painting by G. H. Boughton. By permission of the Proprietors of the International Library of Famous Literature.

Milton's Meeting with Andrew Marvell

that splendid passage in which we seem to catch the very inspiration of Burke: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat." Its premises involved conclusions larger than he himself suspected, but the emotion which he gradually developed can be measured by the splendour of the language.

Areopagitica itself, to the scandal of stationers, was published without a licence. It was followed by a tract on Education (June, 1644), prompted by his personal interest in pedagogy and by a discussion with Samuel Hartlib, extraordinary alike for the high standard set up and for the eloquence of its language. Milton discountenanced the devotion of time to Latin composition. He begins with grammar and pronunciation, and proceeds with the study of education, arithmetic, geography, and easy grounds of religion; the next gradation is the study of authors on agriculture—such as Varro, Columella—use of globes, and natural philosophy. Greek is then followed by the institution of physic, economics, and politics; theology and church history combined naturally with a systematic study of Hebrew and the Syriac tongues; logic, poetry, and the higher kinds of composition complete the scheme—in the course of which, as Milton remarks casually, the student may have easily learned, at any odd hour, the Italian tongue. Such a scheme was obviously adapted for the education of Miltons and the preparation of readers for the perusal of such poems as *Paradise Lost*. Of the products of this system we know but one, the fluent but superficial Edward Phillips.

An interval elapses between these two groups of tracts and those commencing in 1649, and dealing with the different phases of the political situation, such as *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, published in 1649, a fortnight after the King's execution. It was followed in October by the lengthy *Eikonoklastes*, an answer, point by point, of the famous *Eikon Basilike*,¹ which the defeated party had brought out as a testimony to the integrity of the late King, and as a shrine for the popular image of a martyred saint.

In the interval between these two publications Milton had been appointed Latin secretary to the Commonwealth. His justification of tyrannicide upon the grounds of reason and authority alike had attracted Cromwell's attention. The nature of the bargain implied between two natures so divergent in type as those of Milton and Cromwell was probably simple enough. Cromwell wanted the name and style of Milton—the only English scholar whose name would carry the least weight abroad, the only English Latinist who could meet that paragon of foreign linguists, Salmasius, upon his own ground. Milton, on his side (like Voltaire, or still more like Goethe in a somewhat similar situation), can hardly have failed to be flattered by the attentions and solicitings of the greatest soldier and most practical statesman of the day. He may have even been deluded as to the amount of influence which it would be in his power to exercise. The result was the almost unique diversion of the great humanist and poetic scholar for the space of ten years from working in marble to working in clay—it must almost be confessed now and again to be working in mud. For much of his political pamphleteering was devoted to Logomachia, a prose flyting, a ferocious word duel between the champions of English republicanism, so called, and continental monarchy. One of the champions boasted that he had destroyed the eyesight, the other that he had destroyed the life, of his adversary.² Cromwell was perfectly right in his estimate that such a controversy would resolve itself into a competition as to which side could call names best, and also in his foresight as to the ascendancy which he would be able to establish for his own views and sentiments over the ideals which were native and proper to Milton's intellectual idiosyncrasy. How completely Milton stood aloof from the popular current of his age is shown by his plea for a commonwealth as the readiest solution of all difficulties in the spring of 1660, upon the very eve of the Restoration, when all men were thirsting for a return to the old paths of monarchy. His sympathy with the dictatorship of Cromwell, by which a real tyrant was set up in place of a sham, can hardly have been a genuine one. Milton, however, was illuded by Cromwell's marvellous adaptability in winning the best instruments that he needed for his purpose, and by the magnetism of a great personality, the personal deference of whose attitude to himself at the critical moment had subtly appealed to the poet's vanity.

Of Milton's later and miscellaneous prose writings, his letters, his histories, his manuals of grammar and logic, and his Latin treatise of Christian doctrine (disinterred from the State Paper Office, 1823), it is needless

¹ "Following up the royal meditations chapter by chapter, Milton meets them with refutation, mockery, or ridicule. He feels nothing of the glamour of sentimental attachment to the royal saint. The tone of his reply is sufficiently indicated by the text prefixed to the pamphlet: "As a roaring lyon and a ranging beare, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people." At times Milton is savagely vindictive in his antipathy to the late King, as, for instance, when he revives the malignant calumny that Charles had poisoned his own father; and throughout the pamphlet no gleam of sympathy for a fallen man, no spark of generous feeling towards a vanquished cause, lightens the stern pages of ruthless analysis and condemnation. In rhetorical ability and force of thought and language, *Eikonoklastes* completely surpasses the King's book, but the image that floated before the tear-dimmed eyes of men could not be broken by weapons of logic and argument" (Masterman, *Age of Milton*).

² "As Salmasius reproached Milton with losing his eyes in the quarrel, Milton delighted himself in the belief that he had shortened Salmasius's life, and both perhaps with more malignity than reason. Salmasius died at the Spa, September 3rd, 1653; and, as controvertists are commonly said to be killed by their last dispute, Milton was flattered with the credit of destroying him" (Johnson).

to speak in detail, as their interest is comparatively small, and they lack the passion and the inspiration of the great passages in the earlier tracts. Of his prose works as a whole it is enough to observe that the pamphlets (twenty-five in number—twenty-one English, four Latin) fill the second, or political, panel of Milton's life (1640-60). Their immediate political influence can have been decorative at best; several were written for the express purpose of asserting a personal freedom from restraint, not a few are marred by coarseness, bitterness, and violence. Yet it is not possible to agree with Mark Pattison that Milton's prose period was one during which he prostituted his genius to political party. Except where he is obviously merely the mouthpiece of Cromwell, Milton is as much of the unpractical but impeccable scholar and idealist in his prose as in his verse; and there are passages of greater splendour in Milton's prose than in almost any other English prose writer of any period whatsoever. Pestered as his prose is by the inveterate seventeenth-century habit of citation from the classic and patristic writers, and inordinate as are his periods in their complicated length, involution, and obscurity, there is a fortissimo passage here, a crescendo there, and a cadenza farther on which compensate for the longueurs, and reveal to us the fire of a poet in the rhythm, the harmony, and, above all, in the magnificent imagery which gleams and crackles and finally blazes up through the rough, unpolished surface.

It cannot be denied that there is a personal interest about Milton's prose, together with a warmth of emotion that very rarely penetrates the cold inhumanity of his artistry, as we may call the artificial and elaborate style of his versification. It is of the cold marble, however, which endures. Milton's prose is the prose of a past manner and of a past age. Interesting as it is in revealing the personality of the great poet, we must pass from it to that which has a more permanent interest.

The first sure signs of Milton's greatness in poetry are seen in the ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, a noble prelude to the music of *Paradise Lost*. Scholarly though this is in form, and well constructed as is the ground-plan, it is the only one of Milton's poems that bears traces of juvenility, which is shown in the luxuriance of the imagery and phrasing and in the facile character of the rhyming. Learned though the poem is, too, it shows more signs of spontaneous and unsophisticated religious feeling than any of his later verse. The other poems of his early poetic period down to the composition of *Lycidas* in 1637 represent far more clearly and characteristically Milton's idea of poetry as the topmost and brightest flower of scholarly culture. Of such methods of poetic composition as Shakespeare or Byron might be taken to represent; of ideas caught at in the street or during the two hours' traffic of the stage, and committed to paper as rapidly in some tavern parlour under the influence of a rapid glowing imagination; of Byron's dashing theory of the essential rapidity of the conversion of poetical "estro" into printed matter, Milton had a very vague notion. The wood-notes of unstudied art, though they might be admirable in their way, were to him always wild, erratic, and rustic, for to him there would be no really high art without really highly trained study. His early poems are therefore, like those of Tennyson (*Dhoni* and *The Lotus Eaters*, for example), combined exercises of observation, poetic reminiscence, and verse-craft all wrought up into the most exquisitely refined combination of the traditive, or inherited, and original elements in poetry of which we can form any conception. The subject-matter of these exercises was of comparatively little importance—the execution was the thing. Such work is in poetry that which mosaic is in the domain of graphic art—the most difficult and the most permanent of all forms. It requires the most intense concentration, the most refined powers of selection, and the most amazing combination of delicacy of touch with Herculean strength in the welding and fusing.

Such qualities are seen in technical combination in the exquisite lyrical masque of *Comus*, presented at Ludlow Castle in 1634 before the Earl of Bridgewater, then the President of Wales. The cast of the work is more Italian than English; but echoes from Jonson and Fletcher (notably in *The Sad Shepherd* and *The Faithful Shepherdess*), and from Marlowe and Shakespeare (notably in *Faustus* and *The Tempest*), are numerous and unmistakable. The dramatic argument, which is of the simplest, is suggested partly by the Circe episode in the *Odyssey* and partly by the Sacrapant and Delia episode in Peele's *Old Wives' Tale*. Two brothers and their sister, wandering in a wood haunted by Comus, Circe's son and imitator, part from her in search of a guide and shelter. She falls, bewitched by art but protected by her virtue from any real harm, into the enchanter's power, till he is driven off by her brothers and an attendant spirit (half Mentor and half Ariel), and the charm is reversed by Sabrina, the river-nymph of the Severn. The felicity of Shakespeare's rhythm, with the loss perhaps of some of its careless rapture, is caught again and again and composed into faultless passages of blank verse which has still much of the Elizabethan ring about it. Interspersed are passages in a shorter and irregular metre, both the rhymes and images of which, especially in the speeches of Comus, transmit frequent echoes both of sound and expression to Milton's next two masterpieces, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, both of which were written during Milton's Horton period.

Written for the most part in a seven or eight-syllabled verse of four beats, with subtly varied modulations, these two wonderful poems well illustrate what has been said of Milton's extraordinary power of making a poem of what, as far as regards subject-matter, might be termed no more than a very artificial exercise in the use of poetic material. The poet soliloquises in *L'Allegro* as a cheerful and in *Il Penseroso* as a melancholic man; and so remarkable is the pictorial richness of the adjectives with which both soliloquies are inwrought that, after supplying the anthologists of four generations with their richest spoils, the poems have gone farther, and have supplied our speech of every day with some of its choicest felicities. The beauty of the verse-phrasing and expression has been thought by many to reach its climax in the last twenty-two verses of *Il Penseroso*:

"But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloysters pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voic'd quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,

And bring all heav'n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage
The hairy gown and mossy cell
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heav'n doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures Melancholy¹ give,
And I with thee will choose to live."

Three years after the date of *Comus* appeared *Lycidas*. The occasion of the elegy was the death of Edward King, a popular fellow of Christ's College, who had been drowned in crossing the Irish Channel, August, 1637. The universities were wout at this time to celebrate notable events in national or academic life by publishing collections of eulogistic verses in Latin or English. The anthology was published in April, 1638, Milton, who had been a college contemporary of King's, contributing the last of the English poems. The occasion was the propriety of hanging a laurel wreath in memory of a college friend, and the imagery and arrangement of the poem were those of such pastoral models as Theocritus and Virgil, as already imitated in England by Spenser. The due consideration of these facts cuts the ground from Dr. Johnson's splenetic attack upon *Lycidas* in his *Lives of the Poets* on the grounds of its hollowness, insincerity, and artificiality. The poem was not intended as the vehicle of a profound personal sentiment; it was a decorative wreath woven and bent with incomparable skill in strict accordance with a conventional form of universal acceptance and the most reverend antiquity. In poetic beauty, and perhaps we should say in metrical skill also, it is a poem almost without a rival.² The wonderful variety of its numbers, from a solemn and psalm-like grandeur to the lightest delicacy and playfulness, the variegated harmony of the verse (the ground of which is the heroic verse of Marlowe) suggest the indebtedness of Milton to the form of the *canzone* as employed by Petrarch and Boccaccio. But the timbre of the rhythm of *Lycidas* is still thoroughly English and Elizabethan—a last mournful echo, as it were, of an age the inspiration of which was so soon to pass away for ever. The Elizabethans having died out, fully a hundred years were to elapse before our literature could produce in Collins and Gray two men capable of even appreciating such a poem as *Lycidas*.³

Milton began to write his great epic, the evolution of which had so long beset his mind, in the year or (Cromwell's death—1658, the poet himself being then fifty years old. His second wife and her infant had recently died, but he was left the three daughters of his first marriage, and lived with them in Petty France, —studying for his great poem line by line and almost letter by letter, mainly in the night season from October to March. The lines were dictated in parcels of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, and his younger daughters (who envied their elder sister who could not read, so irksome did they find the task) were frequently summoned at night time to take down lines not one of which the whole world could have replaced. "Grand, indeed, is the thought of this unequalled strain poured forth, when every other voice was hushed in the mighty city, to no meaner accompaniment than the music of the spheres." The MS. of *Paradise Lost* was completed at Chalfont St. Giles in 1665, and a fair copy was then made by a scrivener. The poem was officially licensed for publication in 1666, but did not appear until August, 1667, when it was published by Mr. Samuel Simmons, "next door to the Golden Lion, Aldersgate Street," in a small 4to of 342 pages called *Paradise Lost, written in Ten Books by John Milton*, price 3s. Milton received £10 for the first edition of 1,300 copies. A second edition appeared in 1674 (when the ten books were rearranged in twelve), shortly after which Mrs. Milton sold her rights in this and any successive editions for £8. A fourth edition appeared in 1688, from which date to 1750 the issue of Milton remained a profitable monopoly in the publishing house of Tonson. "In the history of *Paradise Lost* a deduction thus minute will rather gratify than fatigue."

The character of Milton's poetic production is (more than is the case with most poets) partly the result of the character of his studies. He set out to be a poet—to make himself a poet. Being already a poet born, he set out to equip himself for his essential business of making poetry. And the training he gave himself lay chiefly in the study of Latin and Greek literature. This did not merely result in his poetry being fully of reminiscences of the "classics." His mind was very full of classical poetry; he must have

¹ Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* had appeared in 1621.

² "No English poem exhibits a more exquisite harmony and variety of numbers, or a more extraordinary science of rhyme, while very few of anything like the same length have a greater number of signal phrases memorable for thought or music or both" (Saintsbury).

³ The revival of the study of poetry in the nineteenth century led to its partial imitation in two noble dirges conceived somewhat in the same spirit—Shelley's *Adonais* and Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*. The latter poem is far tenderer than *Lycidas*, and *Adonais* is charged with much deeper and more symphonic thought and passion. But both poems owe to *Lycidas* a debt which *Lycidas* owes to no other poem.

thought about men and things largely in the form of quotations—and the result is that we get an increasing proportion of reminiscence, and more than that—the deliberate making up and adaptation of phrases and images from the Latin and Greek, and of course a very Latinised vocabulary.

The diction, the mannerism, of *Paradise Lost* is admittedly not that of earlier poets any more than of ordinary speech. Milton made for himself a manner of speaking suitable to the scale of things he was representing and the dignity of his persons. The manner itself was suggested by the Latin, chiefly by Virgil: hence a new fashion of poetic speech, created in the first instance by the urgency of Milton's need for more sustained notes in English verse and by his absorption in classical literature. Milton's mastery of blank verse—apart from his mannerisms—was also largely due to his classical studies. His one great model for blank verse in English was Shakespeare. But Shakespeare's blank verse was not epic; it was everything else, but it was not epic. Nevertheless, Milton might perhaps have learned what he wanted from Shakespeare; but it is evident that he did not. Nor did he go to Spenser for verse models. He went to the classical or quantitative blank verse. His study of it must have enormously trained and improved his ear, quickened his extraordinary sense of consonantal syllabic values, and refined his extraordinary sense of the value both of quantity and of accent. So far as this was not innate, he got it from the classics; it was on them that he sharpened his ear. The result of this is seen in the fact that Milton's blank verse is not Elizabethan; one might almost say it was not English till he wrote it. He comes at last to the verse of the *Samson Agonistes*, and this was the logically complete development of the Miltonic blank verse. Blank verse, in short, was to him not an Elizabethan verse-form, but a classical verse-form which he had to adapt to English; and he adapted it, finally, as if there had been no English blank verse before.

If there is one quality in Milton which one should single out as undeniably great and altogether extraordinary by itself, it is his infallible sense of accentual and consonantal values, together with the mastery of language, which enabled him to realise his ideal harmony between sense and sound in almost every line. His effects depend to an extraordinary degree upon the exact words he uses and their exact order in the line. Examples are everywhere:

“While the bright pomp ascended jubilant!”

“Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air.”

“From Arachosia, from Candaor east,
And Margiana, to the Hyrcanian cliffs
Of Caucasus, and dark Iberian dales.”

And after this calculated harmony of sense and sound, we should admire, in the second place, the complex mutation in Milton's periods, and the studied variety of the Miltonic *cæsura* or pause.

There is no mystery in Milton's poetry, and this is one great reason why many lovers of poetry find it dull and lacking in suggestion. It is, in fact, singularly lacking in suggestiveness. Milton's mind is very Latin. It seeks definition and precision everywhere. It materialises. He believes that if only you knew rather more about what happened you could explain quite nicely in the English language just what the thought of God was when He started the world, and His relations with the devil would be quite clear and intelligible to us if the Bible record were a trifle fuller. It is quite natural to him to regard heaven and hell as substantial portions of space. What else should they be? He does not shrink from making God talk English. He really thinks that God's thought could be expressed in English. At least he believed this just as much as he believed in Adam and Eve and the whole story. In his universe there is nothing essentially beyond the powers of the human (Miltonic) mind. But if he has no sense of mystery he is an absolute master of the vague. His effects of vague horror are perhaps the finest of any (the magnificent finales of Books II. and IV., for instance, or the awe-inspiring descriptions of the shapes by hell's mouth in Book II., line 650, etc., especially 656-73). They make up to some extent for the undue hardness of his usual drawing. Milton, then, is a supreme artist in words and syllabic values and a master of all kinds of poetic artifice, and he has a singularly precise imagination which is at its very best in description of the vague and enormous, to which he succeeds in giving just enough description to make it impressive. But though he is rigidly logical within his limits and very definite in thought, he is not much of a thinker; his mythopoetic faculty entirely transcends and is nourished in exuberant excess of his ratiocinative powers. The worst of it is that the myths he makes are not beautiful, nor are they symbolic; they are just myths. The conceptions underlying *Paradise Lost* are absurd and even childish. No mediæval divine would have fallen into such absurdities. It is not merely a matter of artillery in heaven; a sense of humour would have saved him from symbolism of that sort, if symbolism it is. But his representation of God might almost be a caricature of popular notions. Satan's declaration that God is only greater than he because he has the secret of thunder—“whom thunder has made greater” (I. 258)—seems quite true of the Miltonic God—the God who says:

“Nearly it now concerns us to be sure (V. 720)
Of our omnipotence . . .
. . . lest unawares we lose
This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.”

Paradise Lost is the greatest of Milton's poems, (1) because more of his mature thought, more of his altogether, went into it than any other; (2) because, though the verse-craft of *Samson* and *Paradise Regained* is as great, the



From the Painting by Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A.

The Defeat of Comus

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austerity of those poems is such that beauty is sacrificed to a sheer severity of line that becomes barren and monotonous; (3) it represents in the grand manner the life-experience of a poet who was called upon to live during the epic age of our country's history.

The earlier poems have not quite the same verse mastery, and are a much less complete expression of the poet's mind. But they are certainly the most beautiful of any. For the beauty of the style of *Paradise Lost* is to a great extent marred by its subject-matter, which, regarded as a sort of fairy tale, is a dull and rather unpleasant one; while, regarded as an exposition of the universe, it is primitive and incoherent to an extent that is glaringly out of keeping with the perfection of the most chastened and refined Renaissance craftsmanship. Nor, though wonderfully managed and fitting the nature of the narrative, can one admire the mannerisms of *Paradise Lost* in itself. The typical line of this mannerism is such as this:

“To whom the Patriarch of Mankind replied” (V. 506),

or—

“To whom our general ancestor returned,”

for “Adam said.” When these lines extend to whole passages they assume a pseudo-classical rotundity which caught the taste of the next age, and was largely responsible for the characteristic poetic diction of the eighteenth century.

But there is the same artificiality even in *Lycidas*, in which there is not the least sign of any real regret for the “learned friend” amid all the elaboration of the verse. Milton's poetry lacks emotion. It is of the nature of an intellectual descant or thesis, an exercise or a lecture, and, at the highest, an effort intellectually to realise and represent the utterly incomprehensible. Deeply though Milton had studied Spenser, and probably also Donne and Crashaw and Herbert, he had much more sympathy than they had with the marmoreal side of Renaissance culture; hence a certain frigidity and absence of that individual and personal note which breaks so appealingly upon the ear after the extremely impersonal and objective character of Elizabethan poetry. Whenever the personal note is struck in Milton, and it is very rarely (but notably in the opening descants of Books III. and VII.), such passages are treasured as beyond all price. They give the warmth which is so commonly lacking in these high aerial altitudes.

In the same volume with *Paradise Regained*, published by John Starkey in 1671, appeared Milton's last great work, the partly autobiographical poem of his darkened old age—*Samson Agonistes*. As with the subject-matter of *Paradise Lost*, Milton had been anticipated both in the subject and form of *Samson* by the contemporary Dutch poet Vondel; but Milton's drama is cast in a much more severely classical mould, and the verse of it, appropriately to the requirements of drama, is much less regularly symphonic than the verse of *Paradise Lost*. As in a Greek drama, the action is simple, the persons few, the statuesque severity of the iambic dialogue being relieved by the stately strophes of the chorus, which bears the same close relation to the development of the plot as in the tragedies of Sophocles. Samson himself acts as spokesman in the Greek manner at the beginning of the drama, and the catastrophe is related in the Attic fashion through the agency of a messenger. The whole piece reflects faithfully the austere patriotism and religious feeling of the Old Testament, but so closely are details of style and construction borrowed from Hellenic drama that it is no exaggeration to say that the modern reader derives a more accurate impression of Sophocles from *Samson Agonistes* than from any English translation; or to repeat Goethe's saying that *Samson Agonistes* had more of the antique spirit than any modern poem. It is characteristic of the more austere sublimity of Milton's later art that the mythology is drawn from the rugged strength of the more primitive poets, such as Hesiod and Homer (Jove and the Titans, Night and Chaos, Rhea and Saturn). In his use of ancient mythology and geography, as in his use of proper names of epic catalogues generally, of Petrarchan *canzone*, of the “occasional” sonnet and of the verse paragraph, Milton polished to a perfection of contour what had existed hitherto in but rudimentary shape. More than this, he partly created and partly shaped for himself, with a view to his exceptional needs as an epic poet and wielder of a measure not less stately, to be sure, than that of Virgil, a complete body of poetic diction. Spenser, as we have seen, did something of this kind out of archaic dialect and purely English materials. Milton was far from disdaining a pastoral vocabulary, and in *Lycidas* he employs a number of words of true Spenserian mould. His needs, however, far transcended those of Spenser, and in the course of *Paradise Lost* he called into being a large vocabulary of his own evocation from the Latin tongue. This vocabulary and the facilities afforded by it for paraphrase of homely English substantive, adjective, or verb entirely won the heart of our heroic composers from Pope to Hayley, and they ground out commonplaces in it so unmercifully that Wordsworth, in a moment of exasperation, decreed that the whole gaudy concern must go by the board. The danger of playing at Milton has now been fully recognised.

Milton can get more vibration out of a word than any poet in our language. He worked upon the foundations of verbal utterance (as Chatham for other purposes knew how to do), and every word with him is charged not only with its plain meaning and its life-history as a word, but is fraught with a subtle music struck from some secret chord, and freighted with a long chain of poetic reminiscence. In this manner is Milton's style nourished with the best thought and finest expression of Time. In this way does the phrase become not only an intellectual exercise, but also an emotional force, while *Paradise Lost* becomes the Historic Peerage in which we rummage for the pedigree of every stray slip from the House of Poetry that lays claim to a noble lineage or an ancient inheritance. It is probably no exaggeration to say that Milton is the greatest master of the poetic art in modern times—at any rate, since Dante. It is true that, as compared with Spenser or

Shakespeare, for instance, there is an almost inhuman severity about his art: the claims of æsthetic beauty are with Milton unduly paramount over those of emotion or feeling, and the interpretation of his parable is to modern ideas much too strained. The poet, nevertheless, extorts our homage; he compels our reverence, and the more we understand, the deeper that reverence tends to become.¹

¹ The two older universities have both issued handsome texts of Milton's, but Henry J. Todd's edition (first issued in 1801, and supplemented by a Life and a Verbal Index) remains the most complete, while the just favourite of the public is Prof. Masson's edition (3 vols., or condensed in one as the Globe edition*). Of the *Poems* first printed in 1645, Thomas Warton's edition of 1785 has not been surpassed. A rough draft of the MS. is preserved at Trinity, Cambridge (Facsimile 1899). There are handy reprints in the Little Library and in the Gateway Series. Dr. Johnson's famous anti-honeysuckle Life of Milton was written in January-February, 1779; it was based mainly upon the spade-work of Wood, Aubrey, Phillips, and Jonathan Richardson. Prof. David Masson's noble monument to the biographical fame of Milton, commenced in 1859, was completed in 1894. Lowell was strangely infelicitous in his comments upon Masson's *Life and Times of Milton*, and provoked from Jowett the oft-cited quotation, "O for a stone-bow to hit him in the eye!" Among the shorter studies the most notable are those of Mark Pattison (1880), Dr. Richard Garnett (1889), W. P. Trent (1899), and Walter Raleigh (1900). Valuable studies of Milton's thought are given by Dowden and Tulloch, of his classical mythology by C. G. Osgood (1900), and of his prosody by R. Bridges (1893) and Courthope (*History of English Poetry*). In the harmonious sea of Miltonic verse, as Courthope points out, the rhythmic unity of the single verse or line is subtly balanced with that of the verse paragraph, the cadence of which is punctuated and varied until it acquires a beauty and proportion approximating that of a rhyming stanza. These periods are bound together into a single chain of harmony by a hitherto unrivalled use of the old Anglo-Saxon principle of alliteration; and the whole of his verse is thus welded into a symphonic whole, governed by principles of verse harmony (innate in the language but hitherto undeveloped) and wrought into a system governed by the intuition of sheer musical genius, from which a scheme of Miltonic prosody as regular and complete as the classical prosody of a Virgil can be systematically deduced. To carry such a vast weight of imagination and learning, a metrical vehicle of extraordinary complexity was indispensable; and perhaps of all European languages English alone could have provided what was required. For in our tongue the Teutonic and the Latin genius unite, just as our constitution has been the instrument of reconciliation between the Norman and Saxon races, between monarchy and feudalism, between absolutism and republican freedom, between ecclesiastical tradition and the liberty of conscience. Valuable suggestions have been made in dealing with this part of the subject by Mr. J. W. Allen. Some interesting remarks upon the Iconography of Milton are scattered in S. Leigh Sotheby's *Ramblings in Elucidation of the Autograph of Milton*, 1861. The poet wrote an exceptionally fine and delicate hand. For "New Lights" on Milton see *Quarterly Review*, No. 194.

In 1750 William Lauder issued his *Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns in his "Paradise Lost,"* an indictment of wholesale plagiarism against the poet, but the charge was itself an imposture, and as such was exposed by Bishop John Douglas in 1751. Warton and other critics have shown progressively the enormous extent to which Milton wove into his fabric the felicities of other men's phrasing wherever he found them. But such discoveries, as in the cognate case of Tennyson, only enhance our admiration for the semi-miraculous power of transforming while assimilating—a species of transubstantiation. *Nova Solyma*, a Latin romance modelled upon the *New Atlantis* (printed in six books by John Legat in 1648 and translated by Walter Begley in 1902), was claimed as Milton's; but his silence in regard to it and the un-Miltonic character of its Latinity are fairly conclusive against its being his. As a Latin poet he was surpassed by Campion, and perhaps also by Cowley and May. Milton's collections for a Latin Dictionary were extensively utilised by the editors of the *Cambridge Dictionary* of 1693. As in the case of Shakespeare, Milton's unique greatness was promptly recognised in England. Abroad, his genius obtained a certain recognition, especially in Germany, before Shakespeare was heard of, and a good Life has been done by a German, Alfred Stern (1879). For all that we are sceptical as to the possibility of a complete appreciation of *Lycidas* or *Paradise Lost* (in such passages as I. 780, II. 490, IV. 130) by any save a true-born native ear.

CHAPTER IX

PROTO-RATIONALISTS: THOMAS HOBBS

"Hobbes was a thinker and writer of marvellous power, and take him altogether, is probably the greatest of English philosophers."—HUXLEY.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury—Lord Clarendon—The Royal Society.

EDWARD HERBERT, known to fame as Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was born at Eyton, in Shropshire, on March 3rd, 1583—in the same year with Massinger and the great jurist who afterwards became his friend, Hugo Grotius. Hobbes was born only five years later. He was a remote kinsman of the great Pembroke and Powis families, and an elder brother of the deepest and sweetest of religious songsters, George Herbert, who sang on earth, wrote old Izaak, such hymns and anthems as he and the angels and Mr. Ferrar now sing in heaven.

Of his early youth, with its impossibly precocious questions and orations, his innate antipathy to deceit, and such-like, Lord Herbert tells us much in his queer braggadocio *Autobiography*, which Walpole found so side-splitting on first reading it in manuscript that he persisted in having it printed, and finally overcame the opposition of the Powis family in the matter. It certainly presents their kinsman in a singular light—a compound of the gasconading Urquhart, the translator of Rabelais, and of the fire-eating Alan Breck—for ever boasting of his duels, his gentle blood, and his genealogical choler.

Of his Oxford career Herbert says little, but he has much about his ailments and his accomplishments—swimming, dressing, dancing fencing, and "riding the great horse." At eighteen he married Sir William Herbert of St. Julians' daughter, and went to court, where Queen Elizabeth was profoundly impressed by his *beaux yeux* (so he gives us to understand), patted him twice on the cheek, and swore by "God's death" it was a grievous pity that he was married, and so

young too. A few good stories will be found intertwined amid the texture of his hunting and duelling and diplomatic exploits, such as the Duke of Montmorency's wary answer to Henri IV. when he offered money and exchange for Chantilly: "Sieur, la maison est à vous, mais que je sois le concierge." Or his answer to the Duke of Neuburg: "Of what died Sir Francis Vere?" "Per aver niente a fare" (Of having nothing to do); and Spinola's comment, "And it is enough to kill any general."

Herbert's own later career forms a gloomy and ironical epilogue to the triumphal portion. In 1624, when he was still little over forty, he was deprived of his ambassadorship in the interests of James I.'s weak and capricious diplomacy. He was rewarded with the cheap honour of an Irish peerage, but could not get the arrears of his salary. His devices to get back again into employment were all in vain; all that Charles would concede him was to exchange his Irish for an English peerage. He set to work gloomily upon his *Life of Henry VIII.*, his *Philosophical Treatises*, and his *Autobiography*. Upon the outbreak of the Civil War he hedged frankly until 1644, when such a course became no longer possible. He then had to make over his castle of Montgomery to the Parliament, and proceeded almost destitute to London, where he died in Queen Street, St. Giles's, on August 20th, 1648, in receipt of a Parliament pension of £20 a month. His defection spelt ruin to the Royalist cause in Montgomeryshire; and in most people's opinion the "heroic" Herbert had saved his property at the expense of his honour.

In literature the "black lord" has a niche

not only as the author of the delightfully impertinent and coxcombical *Autobiography* (first published at the Strawberry Hill Press in 1764), in which his gusto in bragging about himself and developing his personality gives his writing an aroma of really fine literature, but also as the creator of an elaborate historical eulogy of *Henry VIII.* (first published in 1649) and as the versifier of *Poems* (first issued in 1665), as obscure and as rugged as those of his master Donne, in which, however, Herbert used the metre already used by Raleigh and since consecrated by Tennyson in *In Memoriam* with genuine feeling. As the author of the *De Veritate* (1624), *De Causis Errorum* (1645, to which was appended the tract, *Religio Laici*), and *De Religione Gentilium* (Amsterdam, 1663, first in English 1709), Herbert accomplished work of more significance, and has fully justified his title in the eyes of later historians to be called the father of English Deism. In these works, roughly and summarily speaking, Herbert rejects the idea of Revelation, but maintains that all men alike entertain innate ideas on the subject of God and the future life. Incidentally he describes sin as very often attributable to hereditary physical defects, and declares that a virtuous man, whatever form his religion may take, will attain to the reward of happiness. In his estimate of the value of common sense as a guide, and of the significance of the universality of fundamental ideas, Herbert was a pioneer of the school of common-sense philosophers, as in other respects he was one of the very first of English autobiographers and of English metaphysicians; while in his *Ode upon a Question moved whether Love should continue Forever*, he was, perhaps, the first to employ the stanza of *In Memoriam*.

Herbert's work encountered a storm of indignation; but it bore fruit in the work of Hobbes, Chillingworth, Cudworth, and the later speculations of Deists such as Toland, Tindal, and Collins.¹

Thomas Hobbes was born on April 5th, 1588, his birth being hastened by the fear of Mrs. Hobbes that the Spaniards of the Armada were making straight for the town of Malmesbury, in which the Hobbes family had set up its tent. The philosopher's father was vicar of an adjoining parish—and rather a strange one, if the

story be true that he once woke up in church after a nap and informed the congregation that "clubs were trumps." This worldly-minded cleric had to leave his charge in consequence of an act of violence perpetrated upon one of his flock. A worthy uncle, who was, like Shakespeare's father, a glover, took charge of the deserted family, and sent Tom to school and college (Magdalen Hall, Oxford, 1603-8). When he was twenty, and had taken his degree, he had the good fortune to be made a page to William Cavendish, a youth of eighteen, born with an enormous silver spoon in his mouth, and afterwards second Earl of Devonshire. Hobbes made the grand tour and settled down happily at Chatsworth, the friend of his pupil and a favourite with his family, who gave him all the books he wanted. Under the Cavendishes' roof he probably met Ben Jonson, and may have met Bacon.

Unhappily for Hobbes's continuance in the retreat in which his serenest and happiest years were passed, the second Earl died of "excessive indulgence in good living" in 1628, and the Dowager Countess found it necessary, or at any rate desirable, to retrench. Hobbes was comparatively fortunate in obtaining a travelling tutorship. He was now forty years of age, and it was during the next few years that an introduction to geometry and to Descartes first gave his mind its decided philosophic bent. Among other learned men whose personal acquaintance he made on his foreign tour should be mentioned Galileo, Gassendi, Mersenne, and Selden. It became his ambition now to be numbered among the philosophers. He abandoned the grazing habit of the mere scholar, and devoted himself to profound contemplations upon the origin of matter. In 1631 he was mightily pleased on being recalled to the Cavendish household as tutor to the third Earl, and henceforth his relations with the family were virtually unbroken. He was as felicitous in the munificent patronage of the Cavendish family as was Locke subsequently in that of "Sir Francis Masham, at Oates, in Essex." When he went abroad for the third time, in 1634, he was welcomed by the European thinkers as a fellow inquirer. In three years he returned, and in the intervals of tutorial work, which became more and more frequent, began the

¹ See De Remusat's interesting monograph on *Lord Herbert* (Paris, 1874), Churton Collins's edition of the *Poems* (1881), and Sidney Lee's edition of the *Autobiography* (with continuation 1886).

exposition of his system of philosophy. His meditations were interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War, upon which Hobbes, who was not a fighting man, led the van of the *émigrés* to France, where he continued eleven years.

Hobbes, the Herbert Spencer of the seventeenth century, now commenced steady work at his system of synthetic philosophy. It is true that he contributed nothing of the slightest value to the special sciences; but he worked out a legal and political theory which had a very powerful and direct effect upon the course of speculation, while the indirect effects of his system of inquiry were undoubtedly immense. His "selfish system" of moral philosophy was expounded primarily in one or two minor writings, especially the *De Corpore Politico*, the *Elementa Philosophica de Cive*, and the small *Treatise on Human Nature*, followed by an admirably cogent *Letter upon Liberty and Necessity*. The most enduring part of his system is that which forms a contribution to political science, and it is more important now historically, on account of its independent and scientific spirit, than as a working theory. The most valuable part of his synthesis is summarised in the *Leviathan*.¹ In this Hobbes detaches the political man swayed primarily by fear of his fellow-men, just as the economist detaches the "economic man" swayed primarily by self-interest. From the principle of self-preservation he deduces as a pure necessity the growth and concentration of the sovereign power. The *bête-noire* of every sensible person, he implies, is a mixed government—a disputed sovereignty. Human progress is conditioned by an implicit contract between the people and the sovereign—a kind of pact or covenant in which in the interests of that overwhelming need, security, the individual (*en bloc*, thus forming the people) resigns his right of waging private war and his right of governing himself generally into the hands of a sovereign. Military, civil, legislative, and administrative power is transferred wholly into the hands of this sovereign; the multitude thus acquires unity through the agency of this sovereign-Leviathan. When this sovereign ceases to ensure peace and to protect his subjects, then and then only the compact can be relaxed. The end of his institution is peace, and as long as peace is preserved the sovereign is supreme, irresponsible, of in-

defeasible title. Law is simply the command of the sovereign. He goes still further, and identifies law and morality. To maintain order, he contends, is to enforce morality. If the Church says otherwise, the Church is wrong; but the Church in any case must be rigorously subordinated to the authority of the sovereign.

Underneath Hobbes's somewhat crude, and sometimes incoherent, but always lucidly expressed, exposition, it will thus be seen that there is a logical, rationalistic, profound, and thoroughly modern conception of State right. Personally Hobbes preferred monarchy, no doubt, but he scarcely argues for one form of government more than another; his special point is that in every form, monarchic, aristocratic, or democratic, there must be a sovereign—an ultimate supreme and single authority (the political like the animal organism being essentially a unit). Regarding the theory locally and superficially, Hobbes's contemporaries looked upon his sovereign-Leviathan, invested with supreme power over both material force and the force of opinion, as a portent and a monster. Time and competition, however, have shown Hobbes's theory of the necessity of State unity to be essentially correct, and in England the theoretic power of Leviathan sovereignty has long been conferred upon the committee of wealthy landowners, lawyers, and labour controllers which goes by the name of Parliament.

In morals and law there can be little doubt that Hobbes is the progenitor of Austin, Romilly, and Bentham. In logic he is the ancestor of John Stuart Mill. In many respects he stands as a thinker head and shoulders above any of his generation, though it included such powerful thinkers as Descartes, Herbert, and Pascal. In his time, however, his avowedly low estimate of human nature caused many well-intentioned people to regard his views as blasphemous. His inclination to take a somewhat aggressive and dogmatic line in upholding the cause of science made him specially obnoxious to all religious cults alike. The various sects competed with one another in repudiating his views and holding him up as the enemy of religion. And "Hobbism" was invariably referred to, even by the superior minds among them, as a kind of shallow but subversive and poisonous atheism—much as the

¹ *Leviathan: or, The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651), with a symbolical title-page.

ideas of Voltaire or Tom Paine were referred to a century ago.

In the meantime, Hobbes's candour in criticising had led to his rapid retreat from Paris. He had renewed acquaintance with the Cavendish family during their exile; he had patronised and aided the precocious young philosopher, William Petty; he had even for a time been mathematical tutor to the exiled Prince of Wales (Charles II.); but he had lost his best friends Mersenne and Gassendi, he had managed to alienate Descartes, his views on ecclesiastical matters were regarded as dangerously subversive, and the *Leviathan*, which the author presented in manuscript to Charles upon his return to Paris after his escape after Worcester, was deemed by Clarendon and all the Conservatives to be a most insidious and demoralising book. The result was that he had to retreat to England and make his peace with the "Rump." Like the man of peace that he was, he justified this reconciliation with the *de facto* Leviathan by an ingenious double-edged sophistry. To the Roundheads he said that he was setting an example of rational submission to the existing régime; to the Cavaliers he explained that by submitting to the enemy betimes he was diminishing the plunder of the usurpers, and so would be better able, in the fulness of time, to serve his rightful sovereign.

In 1653 he again became a member of the Earl of Devonshire's household, this time at Latimers, in Buckinghamshire. During the next few years he incurred considerable ridicule at the hands of John Wallis and the Royal Societarians by his unguarded incursions into geometry and his persistent claim to have solved the problem of squaring the circle. The Churchmen and politicians of the old school were only too glad of a pretext to sneer at him as a mere paradox-monger in philosophy. Fanaticism was very far at that time from being fangless, and people were not wanting who sought in the dangerous growth of "Hobbism" for an explanation of the great pestilence of 1665. A parliamentary committee in quest of the best practical means of suppressing atheism was "instructed to receive information about Mr. Hobbes's *Leviathan*." Fortunately, the old philosopher had a firm friend in

Charles II., who always welcomed his appearance at court as a signal for amusement, and who put him down on the pension list for £100 a year. With the aid of Charles, Arlington, and the Devonshires he managed to defy the clergy, though very little love was lost between them.

When his eightieth year was passed he abandoned philosophic controversy, and, like Cowper, devoted his declining years to a translation of Homer into English verse. This long work, in which the measure adopted is that of the decasyllabic quatrain, has more of the quaint to recommend it than of the beautiful, yet it contains beauties in odd corners, as where, for instance, the son of Hector in his nurse's arms with "his beautiful and shining golden head" is compared to "a star upon her bosom."

In November, 1679, being now well over ninety-one, Hobbes was attacked by a mortal complaint, which was aggravated by his moving with the family from Chatsworth to Hardwick. He died there on December 4th, and was buried in the chancel of the parish church of Hault-Hucknall.

We get a vivid idea of the philosopher's personality and habits from the charmingly unsystematic gossip of Aubrey.¹ We learn thus that Hobbes was a decidedly handsome and witty old man, exceptionally good-tempered perhaps for a philosopher, but swayed by philosophic habits, and latterly, at any rate, as impatient of contradiction as Descartes or Spencer himself.

He walked much and contemplated, and he had in the head of his staff a pen and inkhorn; in his pocket was ever a notebook, and as soon as a thought darted he promptly entered it in his book, otherwise he might have lost it. Every chapter was planned out in advance and in detail, so that he knew at once into what pigeon-hole the warm idea was to be placed. He read comparatively little, but thought the more, and wrote, as we have seen, much. In his later years he rose about seven, and breakfasted on bread-and-butter; then he walked and meditated till ten; he dined at eleven, as his stomach could not bear waiting till the Earl's dinner at two. After dinner he took a pipe of tobacco and a nap, and in the afternoon wrote down his morning's thoughts. He had

¹ After Aubrey read Sir Leslie Stephen's entertaining monograph on *Hobbes** (in *English Men of Letters*) and Sir J. F. Stephen's Essays in *Horæ Sabbaticæ* (II.). The *Leviathan* is reprinted by the Pitt Press (1903) and in the Universal Library. Molesworth's annotated edition (1846) is in 16 vols.

been much addicted to music in his youth, and practised on the bass viol. He had always books of "prick-song" lying on his table, such as Lawes's songs, and at night, when he was in bed and the doors made fast, so that he was sure of being unheard, he would sing aloud for his health's sake. He denied the common report that he was afraid to be alone on account of ghosts. He was not afraid of spirits, but of being knocked on the head for £5 or £10. Hobbes was evidently careful about his health, and a believer in bodily exercise. He played tennis occasionally, and when in the country, where there was no tennis-court, walked up and down hill till he was in a great sweat, and then had himself rubbed down. Of his vices we hear little, even from his adversaries. He calculated, for Aubrey's benefit, that he had been drunk about a hundred times (not more) in the course of his life. Kennett speaks of a natural daughter, whom he called his *delictum juvenutis*, and for whom he provided; but if he had been habitually immoral, his respectable opponents would hardly have refrained from obstreperous accusation.

Perhaps the most durable literary monument of the Commonwealth was the noted *History* of Clarendon. As a political narrative of an historian's own time it has not been surpassed in this country. Edward Hyde (born at Dinton, near Salisbury, February, 1609; died at Rouen, December 9th, 1674), who became Earl of Clarendon at the Restoration, took a prominent part in England's history. His reproachful fidelity in a great cause, his inopportune conservatism, his qualifications as a scapegoat, and the "gust of envy" which finally transported him back to exile—all these things are bound up with our knowledge of the great political struggle between Venetian oligarchy and Tudor despotism which raged from 1628 to 1688. The famous *History of the Rebellion* was written originally in island refuges between 1645 and 1648. Into its texture was subsequently woven the more public portions of an autobiography, written 1669-70. The unused portion of this

Life of Clarendon (which remains a most interesting and amusing and instructive document) was subsequently printed in 1759. The *History* appeared at Oxford, 1702-4. From the first it had an important influence upon political thought. It was based upon noble models (chiefly the Latin historians Livy and Tacitus), and at its best the style, though copious, is strong and clear. It is partial, discursive, and uneven; but it is to be remembered that it was originally intended partly as a manifesto, and rather as an "exact memorial of passages" than a "digested relation." Nothing can replace it as a vivid narrative of those twenty memorable years, 1640-60; for it was written by a chief actor, in whose memory lingered details simply priceless to the historian. Macaulay justly commended it as a splendid study for a young man, and Sir Walter Scott, but for Constable's "fall from heaven," would have annotated it as it deserved.

Clarendon's work suggests a comparison with Thucydides, in that Hyde was himself a prominent actor in the events that he describes, and there are, especially in his character-sketches,¹ passages that will bear comparison with the *graffiti* of the great Athenian master. As in the case of Thucydides, too, banishment from his native country gave Hyde an opportunity for calm and detached contemplation of the events through which he had lived. But there the comparison ends. The inner spirit of the two men is different. Neither his double exile nor advancing years brought philosophic calm or intellectual fairness to Clarendon. He writes now as a partisan of the monarchy, now of the Church, now of his own administration; lack of insight or of knowledge precludes a clear vision of his opponents' point of view. But none the less, Clarendon's work is epoch-making in the development of English historical writing. His book is a national monument. Here the nation's story is told by a man of practical knowledge, in language well suited to the subject, and in a tone of honest conviction. For a century and a half (until its prestige was

¹ To celebrate the memories of eminent and extraordinary persons Clarendon held to be one of the principal ends of history; hence the portraits which fill so many pages. His characters "are not simply bundles of characteristics, but consistent and full of life, sketched sometimes with affection, sometimes with light humour. Evelyn described them as so just and tempered, without the least ingredient of passion or tincture of revenge, yet with such natural and lively touches as show his lordship well knew not only the persons' outsides but their very interiors." Pepys describes Hyde's eloquence in debate as a mighty pretty thing. He was one of the first statesmen in England who owed promotion directly to literary and forensic skill. As a young man he knew Jonson, Waller, Selden, Falkland, Hales.

sapped by the no less partial presentment of regard to the prominent actors in the great Carlyle) it fixed the ideas of Englishmen with Puritan revolution.¹

¹ See *Characters and Episodes of the Great Rebellion*, ed. G. D. Boyle, 1889. The best edition of the *History* is W. D. Macray's, in 6 vols., 1888, newly collated with the MSS. in the Bodleian.* The Oxford University Press, called, after its benefactor, the Clarendon Press, enjoys a monopoly (by Act of Parliament) of the production of the *History* in this country. Ranke and Gardiner pass interesting estimates upon Clarendon, and there is a most valuable survey of his Life in the *Dictionary of National Biography** by Prof. Firth. A desirable edition of *The Life . . . in which is included A Continuation of his History of the Great Rebellion* is that printed at Oxford in 1827.

The inception of the Royal Society has been traced down to 1660 in a previous chapter. In 1661 a new era opened with the presidency of Sir Robert Moray and the membership of Charles II., who proposed some laughable experiments to his erudite associates. In 1662 the persevering philosophers were, through the King's grace and favour, incorporated by charter as the Royal Society of London for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge. The charter-book of the Society is one of the finest collections of autographs in the world. In 1655 the Society had gained the adhesion of the singular genius of Robert Hooke (1635—1703), who had already, we are told, invented thirty ways of flying, which he communicated to the warden of Wadham. In November, 1662, he was made curator of experiments, and the register testifies to the inconclusive eagerness with which he rushed from one inquiry to another—from respiration and falling bodies to telegraphy and diving-bells, and thence with ardour to meteorology. He measured the vibrations of a pendulum, 200 ft. long, attached to the steeple of St. Paul's; invented a useful machine for cutting the teeth of watch wheels; fixed the thermometrical zero at the freezing-point of water; and ascertained the number of vibrations corresponding to musical notes. This he explained on August 8th, 1666, to Pepys, who thought his "discourse in general mighty fine" but his pretensions "to tell how many strokes a fly makes with her wings" "a little too much refined." In 1665 was published his *Micrographia, or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies*, a book full of ingenious ideas and singular anticipations. It contained the earliest investigations of the "fantastical colours" of thin plates, with a quasi-explanation by interference, the first notice of the "black spot" in soap-bubbles, and a theory of light as "a very short vibrative motion" transverse to straight lines of propagation through a "homogeneous medium." Heat was defined as "a property of a body arising from the motion or agitation of its parts," and the real nature of combustion was pointed out in detail, eleven years before the publication of Mayow's similar discovery. Amongst other original ideas and anticipations of this fertile brain, it will suffice to mention the discourse on gravity containing the happy idea of measuring its force by the swinging of the pendulum, from which dates the clear idea of the mutual attraction of the heavenly bodies and of the planetary movements, though Hooke had not the mathematical ability to work out his theories. Similarly he devised an anemometer, divined the rotation of Jupiter, described the refraction of light, and invented a spiral spring to regulate the balance of watches; he also expounded the true theory of elasticity, suggested several new forms of barometer, and first stated the law of inverse squares. Aubrey gives a particular description of this extraordinary man: "He is but of middling stature, something crooked, pale faced, and his face but little belowe, but his head is lardge; his eie full and popping, and not quick; a grey eie. He haz a delicate head of hair, browne, and of an excellent moist curl. He is and ever was very temperate and moderate in dyet, etc. As he is of prodigious inventive head, so is he a person of great vertue and goodnes. Now when I have sayd his inventive faculty is so great, you cannot imagine his memory to be excellent, for they are like two buckets, as one goes up the other goes downe. He is certainly the greatest mechanick this day in the world." John Flamsteed (1646—1719), the first Astronomer Royal, was a prominent member of the Society from 1680 to 1700. He owed his appointment and the foundation of the Observatory to the indignation of Charles II. that there were not better celestial maps in existence for the use of seamen. Overworked, ill, and querulous though he was, Flamsteed achieved the most amazing results, his work with that of Hooke helping to bridge the gulf that separated Tycho Brahé from Newton. A contemporary and rival of Flamsteed during the early days of the Society, and one to whom the suggestion and encouragement of Newton's *Principia* was far more directly due, was Edmund Halley (1656—1742), the founder of cometary astronomy, still familiarly known through "Halley's comet." Another pillar of the Society, and one of the most robust inventive minds that a prolific age gave birth to, was John Wallis (1616—1703), who was educated at Felsted School, and was a predecessor of Newton at Trinity, Cambridge. His *Arithmetica Infinitorum* (Oxford, 1655) was the most stimulating mathematical book that England so far had produced, and it contained the germs of the differential calculus. He also wrote a very interesting English grammar, and undertook with success to teach a deaf-mute to speak. In mathematical history Wallis was the greatest of Newton's precursors. An almost equally eminent group is formed by the botanical and zoological pioneers—Nehemiah Grew, William Derham, Francis Willoughby, and John Ray. Of the physicians and chemists of the mid-century, Sydenham and Mayow best deserve to rank among those in whom scientific knowledge was combined with imaginative insight. In "hydraulics," which then occupied such a large field in practical science, Sir Samuel Morland forms a link between the hazy conceptions of the Marquis of Worcester and our first practical engine-builder, Thomas Newcomen. But the reputation of all these pioneers in their several departments of scientific progress pales before that of John Ray (1627—1705), the first true systematist of the animal kingdom, as Cuvier called him—the greatest precursor of Buffon, Linnæus, Cuvier, and Darwin.

BOOK IV
SATIRE AND ESSAY

CHAPTER I

THE RESTORATION: SAMUEL BUTLER

Between modern thought, on some at least of its more important sides, and the thought of men before the Restoration, there is a great gulf fixed. A political thinker in the present day would find it equally hard to discuss any point of statesmanship with Lord Burleigh or Oliver Cromwell. . . . But no gulf of this sort parts us from the men who followed the Restoration. Paley would have found no difficulty in understanding Tillotson; Newton and Sir Humphry Davy would have talked without a sense of severance. There would have been nothing to hinder a perfectly clear discussion on government or law between John Locke and Jeremy Bentham."—J. R. GREEN, *A Short History of the English People*.

Charles II. and literature—The birth of modern English prose—Samuel Butler—A master of rhyme and caricature.

THE gulf in thought and politics which separated the men of the Restoration from their ancestors who lived before the Puritan flood was almost equally marked in the domain of literature. The old English Renaissance, which had long been dying, now ceased to breathe, and a new departure in intellectual civilisation began. The great dislocation which had taken place in society created a singular insensibility among the wits of the new court to the great poets and dramatists of the Elizabethan age. Charles I. had been a devoted admirer of Shakespeare; but to Charles II. there was something insuperably archaic, old-fashioned, and semi-barbaric about the dramatist whom his father and grandfather had delighted to honour. His impatience under the tirades of the Elizabethan drama is amusingly depicted in *Woodstock*. The personal influence of the restored monarch upon English letters was far from insignificant. "The King," says Burnet, "had little or no literature, but true and good sense, and had got a right notion of style, for he was in France at a time when they were much set on reforming their language. It soon appeared that he had a true taste." By this Burnet means that he approved a style which was pre-eminently clear, plain, and short. Everything had long pointed to the necessity of relieving English style by an importation of lucidity, brevity, and grace. Charles instinctively felt the lack of these qualities in our native literature. His

travels had taught him that France was far ahead of his own country in these respects.

The royal influence is the more appreciable at this period, inasmuch as London more than ever dominated the world of letters, while the court dominated London. The idea of the court became avowedly to assimilate its manners to those of the court of Versailles. It discarded almost all that remained of mediæval usage, and became a drawing-room in which, attracted to the throne by security, curiosity, amusement, and interest, the nobles, who are at the same time the chief patrons of letters, meet together and become at once men of the world and men of the court. The aims of such a society, which existed for selfish amusement, are fairly expressed by Etherege when he says: "A gentleman ought to dress well, dance well, fence well, have a talent for love-letters, a pleasant voice in a room, to be always very amorous, sufficiently discreet, but not too constant." Words take the place of deeds—a pleasant voice in a room. We cannot bawl, gesticulate, philosophise, or monologise in a drawing-room. We learn to narrate concisely, to retail anecdotes, to criticise and to discuss. Life is passed in visits and conversations—the art of conversing becomes the chief of all. A clever comment is preferred to an imaginative creation. Wit temporarily quits the province of invention and settles down to criticism, for the purposes of which the long-windedness and exuberance of the old stylists

are recognised as manifestly inappropriate. In order to wing a new flight and to cross the narrow seas our writers have to borrow a pinion from the light and dexterous prose of France.

Most of the transitional works of this period have proved as evanescent as the plays that heralded the great romantic drama of 1587, or the spurious battlements that heralded the Gothic revival of Pugin and Scott. Amidst all this welter of experiment the solitary form of Dryden stands like a solid isthmus between two seas, touching on the one hand the imagination and richness of the past, and on the other the calmer and more critical instincts of the succeeding generation. In one direction he looks not without experience over the great imaginative ocean of Tudor and Stuart literature. In the other he seems to survey in thought the yet untravelled waters of the eighteenth century—the world of reason, judgment and science, of the calm serenity, unruffled optimism, and becoming temper of Berkeley and Addison, of Robertson and Hume, of Burke and of Reynolds. In Dryden we shall find all the most pregnant tendencies of the age epitomised. In him the poetical prose of the great tone-poets (such as Milton, Browne, and Taylor) was transmuted into the prosaic prose of everyday literature. The loss of picturesqueness was great, no doubt, but the gain in smooth-living might be compared to the substitution of friction matches for the flint and steel of our forefathers.

The Restoration, says Matthew Arnold, marks the real moment of birth of our modern prose. Prose's elder sister, Poetry, had suffered rather heavily from the redistribution of favours which commonly attends a birth in the family. For the time being her chief hope of holding her own seemed to depend upon her becoming as prosaic as possible. The new prose was not long in finding a congenial sphere of operations in the new field of criticism. Poetry, in consequence, turned its eyes in the same direction, and discovered the unexplored region of metrical satire. Prose expands from criticism into innumerable letters, memoirs, essays, and periodicals. Poetry approximates more and more to prose in substance, but is carefully differentiated from it in form by what comes to be known as poetic diction. As a variant from satire, it becomes copiously didactic, and is devoted to ungrateful tasks of translation and paraphrase: to de-

scriptive inventories of the arts and sciences or to the descriptive enumeration, in the approved poetic diction of the day, of natural objects. In the sphere of the drama, the decline of the old romantic medley, a complete failure to appreciate such pieces as *The Midsummer Night's Dream* or *Much Ado about Nothing*, leads to more and more divergent results. Tragedy degenerates into the ranting of inflated heroics, of which the sound is monotonous and the sense almost wholly wanting. In this direction the influence of the court in encouraging an imitation of French models was far from beneficial. The comedy of the Restoration similarly borrowed everything from the comedy of France, save the poetry, the delicacy and the good taste which veiled its grossness. In it we get a perfect reflection of the licence which attended the reaction against Puritanism. The dramatists piqued themselves on the frankness and plain dealing which painted the world as they saw it—a world of brawls and assignations, of orgies at Mulberry or Spring Gardens, of fights with the watch, of lies and *double-ententes*, of knaves and dupes, of men who sold their daughters, and women who cheated their husbands.

Before we sail into the main current of Restoration literature in the wake of Dryden, we must stay to describe a derelict in the year of grace 1662, a poem unique in our literature, a strange compound of new wit and old learning, giving expression to the accumulated hatred of the Puritans which had become envenomed in the breasts of thousands during the time of the Commonwealth. The years of the Civil War and of the Republic had been an iron age for literature. For eighteen years there had been an interregnum in public taste—no theatres, no books except works of polemical divinity. Cowley and Denham had been exiled with their sovereign. Waller had remained dumb, and Milton had descended from Parnassus into the plain. The worst effects were seen later, in the barrenness of the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Meanwhile, the revenge of profane literature against its saintly oppressors found appropriate expression in a burlesque. Among burlesques, however, *Hudibras* stands alone.

Samuel Butler was the second son of Samuel Butler, a farmer and churchwarden of Strens-ham, in Worcestershire, where the poet was born and baptised in February, 1613. He was

educated at Worcester Free School, and became a page in the family of Elizabeth Countess of Kent at a salary of £20 a year. In this household at Wrest, in Bedfordshire, he met the scholarly wit and handsome form of Selden, who did more than any teacher to form and mould his mind. He also studied painting, and is said to have painted a head of Oliver Cromwell from the life; but his pictures were so little esteemed in the eighteenth century that they were used in a windowless house to keep out the rain. He served in other families as clerk or attendant, and probably went abroad before 1659, when he published his first work, a prose tract in favour of the Stuarts. Next year he married upon an appointment as secretary to the Earl of Carbery and steward of Ludlow Castle. He lived for some years mainly upon his wife's income, but this dwindled owing to bad investment, and poor Butler grew progressively poorer.

Late in 1662 appeared a small anonymous volume entitled *Hudibras; the first part written in the time of the late wars*. It contained an unfinished burlesque in octosyllabic verse in three cantos, which as Prior relates were made known at court by the taste and influence of the Earl of Dorset. When it was known, says Johnson, it was necessarily admired; the King quoted, the courtiers studied, and the whole party of the Royalists applauded it. Every eye watched for the golden shower which was to fall upon the author, who certainly was not without his part in the general expectation. In 1664 the second part appeared; the curiosity of the nation was rekindled and the writer was again praised and elated. But praise was his whole reward. Clarendon says Wood gave him reason to hope for places and employments of value and credit, but no such advantages did he ever obtain. Oldham writes his famous lines of indignation:

On Butler who can think without just rage,
The glory and the scandal of his age.

The King was fond of giving *Hudibras* as a present to any new face at the court. Clarendon had a portrait of the author in his library over the chimney. Only Pepys could not see enough where the wit lies. But to this day, writes Aubrey, Butler has got no employment, only the King gave him . . . (£300?). “Memo-randum: satyricall witts disoblige whom they converse with; and consequently make to

themselves many enemies and few friends, and this was his manner and case.” “He was of a middle stature, strong sett, high coloured, a head of sorrell haire, a severe and sound judgment; a good fellow . . . sanguino cholerique, middle-sized, strong. He might have had preferments at first; but he would not except any but very good ones, so at last he had none at all and dyed in want.” Wood says he was a boon witty companion; considering his reputation, however, we know remarkably little either of the man or his career. He brought out a third part of *Hudibras* in 1678, but left the poem still imperfect, with an abrupt ending. “Nor can it be thought strange,” says Johnson, “that he should stop here, however unexpectedly. To write without reward is sufficiently unpleasing.” In his last years we know that he was much troubled with gout, but he died of a consumption in Rose Street, Covent Garden, on September 25th, 1780, and was buried in St. Paul's, Covent Garden; “his feet touch the north wall.” Aubrey, Shadwell, and Dr. Davenant were among his pall-bearers. The monument in the Abbey was put up by Lord Mayor Barber in 1721.

Of the *Genuine Remains* (ed. Thyer, 1759) collected and published many years after Butler's death, the most notable are *The Elephant in the Moon*, a skit on the Royal Society, a Dialogue of Cat and Puss ridiculing the heroic plays, and 120 brilliant “Characters” after the pattern of Overbury, Fuller, and Earle. These abound in strokes of shrewdness, sarcasm, and wit such as one might expect from the author of the best burlesque poem in the language. Read especially his sketch of *A Small Poet*, in which, while the pattern is modelled upon Earle, there is not a little anticipatory of the stronger saturnine humour of Swift.

Suggestions from the masterpiece of Cervantes and from Ariosto supply the substratum of Butler's burlesque. He is a cynic, and he can see little in the religious and political professions of the Puritan but a mask for cant and greed. Sir Hudibras (Presbyterian) and his squire Ralpho (Independent) represent the odious types of self-seeking “saints” whom Butler had had the ill-fortune to come across and the penetration to see through.

As a master of rhyme Butler stands high and anticipates the feats of such successors as Swift,

Cowper, Hood, Calverley, Browning, Gilbert, and Seaman. As a king of caricature and of rigmarole he carries us back to John Skelton, and as with Skelton the octosyllabic measure, with its terrible facility, continually carries him off on its back and he seems to be degenerating into one of the primitive glee-men, rambling interminably into incoherent and irrelevant detail. The lack of measure and form and progress about the poem is typically and aggravatingly English.

That Butler's octosyllabics are over-done to the point of monotony and that his jokes are often tasteless while the form of the whole piece is chaotic—all this may not be denied. There is enough filth to remind a great French critic of Rabelais, and enough buffoonery and tiresome caricatured description to recall Scarron at his worst. But there is a fitness and a flavour about Butler's phrasing, terse in its mother-wit for all the writer's incorrigible rambling, which a foreign critic, however eminent, could hardly be expected fully to appreciate. And there is a good deal more in Butler of such qualities as need be concealed from no man.

There is a genuine satiric impulse about all that he wrote. He may not have been an enthusiast for virtue, loyalty, or religion. He seems, in fact, to have had a sufficiently low opinion of human nature. But a real indignation accompanied the insight which enables

him to penetrate the disguises which roguery, hypocrisy, and self-seeking cant are so especially prone to assume during revolutionary times; and there is little doubt that the mixture of cynicism and farce which animates the doggrel of *Hudibras* was much better adapted to stir the age of Charles II. than the lofty scorn of a Burke. There is, too, amongst the wit and satire, learning and buffoonery, a vein of a very rich humour. *Hudibras* and his squire Ralpho set out to put down a bear-baiting, not for compassion towards the bear, but from hatred of amusement *qua* amusement, and they express their views of each other's doctrinal peculiarities with a frankness which is wholly to the advantage of the inquiring reader.¹

It is a mistake to suppose, as Taine did, that *Hudibras* was universally appreciated in its own day. Mr. Pepys bought it twice or more in the hope of being able to discover the pointed humour of it, yet apparently failing; and there is this amount of truth about his strictures, that *Hudibras*, like most epics, comic or otherwise, is relished to-day only in brief extracts. Sir Conan Doyle has made an effective use of it in this fashion in his story of *Micah Clarke*. Despite the rudeness and clever schoolboy buffoonery of which Taine in his most donnish humour so acidly complains, a book the wit and wisdom of which is crystallised into so many imperishable quotations can never be wholly forgotten.

¹ See the passage commencing:

"Presbytery doth but translate
The Papacy to a free state;

A commonwealth of popery
Where ev'ry village is a see."

There is a famous annotated edition of *Hudibras* by Dr. Zachary Grey (the 3 volume edition of 1819 is, perhaps, the best), and there are modern editions by Robert Bell (1855) and Brimley Johnson (1893). The text has been edited for the Cambridge English Classics by A. R. Waller, 1905. No one who is interested should fail to read the enlivening chapter on the Restoration in Taine's great book on English Literature. Dr. Garnett's entertaining *Age of Dryden*, Barrett Wendell's *Temper of the Seventeenth Century* (1904), and Beljame's *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre* (1881), are also to be consulted.

CHAPTER II

DRYDEN AND THE RESTORATION DRAMA

"But at whatever period of his life we look at Dryden, and whatever, for the moment, may have been his poetic creed, there was something in the nature of the man that would not be wholly subdued to what it worked in. There are continual glimpses of something in him greater than he, hints of possibilities finer than anything he has done."—LOWELL, *My Study Windows*.

"By placing his readers on the same level as himself, Dryden freed criticism of its didactic character; and by recognising that there were different methods and principles in literature, and by investigating them and weighing their merits, he established comparative criticism. Moreover, as a consequence of these changes, he raised criticism to the dignity of an art, and established it as a distinct literary form. And for these reasons he is worthy to be called, in the words of his great successor in the eighteenth century, 'the father of English criticism.'"—*Introduction to Dryden's Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (ed. D. NICHOL SMITH).

John Dryden—Early poems—Comedies—Heroic tragedies—Satires—Fables—Critical essays—Congreve—Otway—Nat Lee and Nicholas Rowe.

JOHN DRYDEN was born at Aldwinkle All Saints (the home of old Tom Fuller) in Northamptonshire in the early part of August, 1631. His grandfather, Erasmus Dryden, of Canons Ashby, high sheriff of Northamptonshire, was created a baronet in the seventeenth year of James I.; but the poet's father was a younger son who married in 1630 Mary, a granddaughter of Sir Gilbert Pickering. Dryden was admitted as a scholar at Westminster under Busby, and passed thence to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1650. Dryden's father died in 1654 and left a small estate at Blakesley to his son. Apart from the few school exercises and translations, the death of Cromwell was the first subject of the young poet's muse:

His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone,
For he was great, ere Fortune made him so;
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow.

After the Restoration this piece fell into a state of oblivion, from which it may be believed that the author, who had seen a new light in politics, was by no means anxious to recall it. His very next publications, in fact, were the *Astræa Redux*, celebrating the Restoration, and a panegyric upon the King's coronation. On leaving Cambridge Dryden seems to have lodged with Herringman, a bookseller of the New Exchange, who published his books down

to 1679. His election to the Royal Society in 1662 cemented a connection with many of the learned men of the time. His literary activity at this time was not great, but he took the important step of securing a patron in the person of Sir Robert Howard, whose sister, Lady Elizabeth Howard, he married on December 1st, 1663. At the time of his marriage he had already experienced failure on the boards of the King's Theatre with the flimsy comedy *The Wild Gallant* (February, 1663), and a modified success with a tragi-comedy, *The Rival Ladies*, which appeared eight or nine months later. Alike in their foreign origin, their rhymed verse, and their coarseness, these pieces were deliberately aimed at tickling the jaded and sceptical palate of the newly returned court.

Dryden's pointed preference for rhyme and his rejection of dramatic blank verse were the occasion of the first of his critical controversies, to which we shall have to refer a little later on. In the meantime his position as a dramatist was established by two splendidly mounted plays, *The Indian Queen* and *The Indian Emperor*, brought out at the King's Theatre during 1664-5. In the first of these plays, his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard, had a large share. During the disastrous years of the Plague and the Great Fire, Dryden seems to have stayed with his father-in-law, Lord

Berkshire, at Charlton, in Wiltshire. It was during this period that he composed in elegiac quatrains his notable poem, *Annus Mirabilis*, in which his descriptive power and the fluent energy of his style are first characteristically developed. The poem in its general conception bears a considerable resemblance to the *Pharsalia* of Lucan. With the reopening of the theatres in 1667, Dryden again became active as a playwright. On March 2nd, 1667, Nell Gwynn first fascinated the town in Dryden's comedy of *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen*. This was followed in the autumn by his highly successful adaptation of Molière's *L'Étourdi* called *Sir Martin Mar-all*. A month later appeared Dryden and Davenant's joint adaptation of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, the prologue to which, in a finely written tribute to Shakespeare from Dryden's pen, enshrines the lines:

But Shakespeare's magic could not copied be;
Within that circle none durst walk but he.

Dryden now entered into a contract with the King's Theatre to supply them with plays at the rate of three a year. As playwright in ordinary to the company he drew a stipend of over £300 per annum. But the actual rate of production was little more than one play yearly. In August, 1670, his appointment as Poet Laureate must have brought up his income to nominally well over £600 a year, but his salary was irregularly paid, and Dryden seems to have been free at no time from anxieties on the score of income.

Of Dryden's comedies during this period several owed their success primarily to their licence; in the special sense of comedy or in the gaiety of humour which can stimulate it, Dryden cannot be said to have excelled. The most striking of his plays from 1669 onwards are not the comedies but the heroic tragedies, commencing with *Tyrannic Love* and *The Conquest of Granada* and ending with *Aurengzebe, or The Great Mogul*. Several of these are dignified by rant, and by stilted heroics which Dryden himself would gladly have seen burned. Some of these traits were notably caricatured in the Duke of Buckingham's famous farce, *The Rehearsal*. The poet Bayes of this farce was Dryden; a number of passages in his plays

were parodied, his favourite phrases freely used, his dress and manners mercilessly imitated on the boards of his own theatre. Bayes was first designed to represent Davenant, Dryden's predecessor as Laureate; but after Davenant's death in 1668 and the transference of the laurel to Dryden the latter became the main object of attack, and Bayes became his nickname for ever after. It is evident that the skit was a long time in preparation, and Buckingham, who was the ostensible author, is said to have gone for aid to the author of *Hudibras*, to Sprat, and Martin Clifford, Master of Charterhouse, and great pains were taken in coaching the actor Lacy in Dryden's eccentricities of manner. The result seems hardly commensurate with such a combination of talent, but it had an immense success in its own day. Dryden himself seems to have taken the assault with admirable humour; but he did not spare Buckingham when he found it safe to assail him a few years later, and gibbeted him for ever in that inimitable sketch of Zimri in the first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, published just ten years after the provocation of *The Rehearsal*.¹

The next ten years were mainly devoted to the production of plays, the stage commending itself to Dryden as being still the one paying branch of his profession as author. To his phlegmatic and argumentative mind there was no especial attraction in the traffic of the stage, and he adopted the means of cajoling his audiences which came readiest to his hands. In his comedies he was as ready to appeal to the town's love of indecency as in his dramas he appealed to their political prejudice, or in his tragedies to their singular love of bombast, while for their praise and blame in general he showed little more respect than was shown by Henry Fielding half a century later. Two typical comedies were produced in 1672, *The Marriage à la Mode* (which after the two adaptations *Sir Martin Mar-all* and *Amphitryon*, is the most successful of all his comedies) and *The Assignment, or Love in a Nunnery*, which most deservedly failed in spite of its provocative title. Another comedy, *The Kind Keeper, or Mr. Limberham*, was withdrawn after three days on the score of offensiveness. In 1667 Dryden produced *Amboyna, or The Cruelties of*

¹ "In the first rank of these did Zimri stand,
A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one but all mankind's epitome:

Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon."

he *Dutch to the English Merchants*, an inflammatory drama designed to gratify the anti-Dutch feeling of the hour. In a similar manner he took advantage of the Popish plot, by a play named *The Spanish Friar, or The Double Discovery* performed in 1681. It is a bitter attack upon the hypocrisy and licentiousness attributed to the Catholic priesthood. A more singular performance was *The State of Innocence*, an opera which is founded upon Milton's *Paradise Lost* (published 1669). Aubrey states that Dryden asked Milton's permission to put his poem into rhyme, and that Milton replied, "Ah! you may tag my verses if you will." In the preface Dryden speaks of *Paradise Lost* as "one of the greatest, most noble, and sublime poems which either this age or nation hath produced." The admiration was lasting. Richardson, in his notes to *Paradise Lost*, tells the story to the effect that Dryden said to Lord Buckhurst, "This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too."

But Dryden's most characteristic works during his dramatic period were his heroic tragedies. They were called heroic because they were written in language elevated above nature, and exhibited passion in a state of maniacal ecstasy; but their chief distinction in the history of English literature is the fact that they were written in rhyming couplets. The example, it is true, had been set to some extent by Davenant, but the great exponent of rhyming tragedy both in theory and practice is Dryden himself. The new fashion was largely due to Charles II., who brought back from France confirmed views as to the propriety of rhyme, the observance of the unities, and the limitation of the tragic stage to personages of exalted rank. The most famous of these rhymed plays were *The Conquest of Granada* and *Aurengzebe*. This use of rhyme, so necessary to the rhythm of French verse, gives a monotony and a regularity to English drama entirely destructive to the free play of the national genius in poetry. The experiment of Dryden has consequently never been repeated, and except for the fifteen years or so which followed the Restoration the use of rhymed couplets has been confined on the stage either to prologues and epilogues, or to short salvoes specially designed to mark the fall of the curtain. In the last and best of his rhyming tragedies, *Aurengzebe*, he expresses his determination to return to the form of verse which had been used with such success by the old

masters, and no longer to make its sense a slave of syllables. The result was seen in his fine blank-verse tragedy, *All for Love*, on the theme of *Antony and Cleopatra*, which was brought out at the King's Theatre early in 1678. The ambition of the play suggests that Dryden proposed, as an English Corneille, to rival Shakespeare himself. If so, the result is a magnificent failure. From a French point of view the dignity of the play is seriously compromised by the unseemly squabble between Octavia and Cleopatra. Yet for strength and dignity combined, no dramatic writing of Dryden approaches the first and last acts of *All for Love*. The scene between the devoted veteran Ventidius and his wayward master with its delicate fluctuations of feeling is unquestionably superb.

It was in 1681, after a long interval of almost exclusively dramatic work, in the course of which his technique had matured in a semi-miraculous manner, that Dryden resumed the series of his political poems with his famous *Absalom and Achitophel*, the first of English political satires in verse. The occasion was the restless scheming of Shaftesbury and the country party against the court, and more especially the determination of Charles that the succession should take its legitimate course, and should not be diverted from his brother James to his illegitimate son Monmouth. The situation was much aggravated by the attempts of unscrupulous Whigs to excite the London mob by preposterous fictions as to the designs of the Pope and the Jesuits against our Protestant land. The plan of the satire was not new to the public. A Catholic poet had in 1679 paraphrased the scriptural story of Naboth's vineyard and applied it to the condemnation of Lord Stafford on account of the Popish Plot. Neither was the application of the story of *Absalom and Achitophel* to the persons of Monmouth and Shaftesbury first made by Dryden. A prose paraphrase published in 1680 had already been composed upon this allusion. But the vigour, the happy adaptation not only of the incidents but of the very names of individuals characterised, the glowing force of these characterisations, and the masterly vigour of the metre, in which each verse serves as a stroke and ends with a lash, gave Dryden's poem a novelty of effect which has rarely been surpassed. The depreciation of Shaftesbury is precisely as effective as it could be made with-

out conspicuous exaggeration. The character of Absalom seems exactly made for the feebly aspiring and invertebrate Monmouth.

The success of the poem was so great that the court once more turned to Dryden for his assistance when it required satirical capital to be made out of the acquittal of Shaftesbury by a grand jury upon a charge of high treason. The Whigs celebrated the event by striking a medal with a motto "*Lætamur*," and in March, 1682, Dryden published *The Medal*, a satire against sedition, in which he retouched and re-emphasised his unflattering profile of the Whig leader, and once more drew upon himself the vituperation of a nameless crowd of Whig scribblers. Rather more formidable, however, was the assault upon Tory bards by Dryden's chief dramatic adversary, Thomas Shadwell, in a lampoon called *The Medal of John Bayes*. Dryden retaliated in the autumn of 1682 in a strenuous personal lampoon called *MacFlecknoe*, upon the form of which he expended so much elaboration that it served as a perfect model for *The Dunciad* and all its derivative burlesques. Richard Flecknoe, an Irish poetaster, is represented as dying full of years in 1678, and as justly bequeathing his absolute power over the realms of nonsense to the most accomplished of all his heirs:

Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity,
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.

The ancient monarch had just time to draw up the protocol for his successor's coronation when he was lowered, still declaiming, down a trap:

Sinking, he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind;
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

The assault was followed up by an, if possible, still more robust buffeting of Shadwell and Settle as Og and Doeg in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, which came out in November, 1682, and was mainly the work of Nahum Tate, but was so devised as to work off the aftermath of Dryden's satirical harvest in this peculiar field—that, namely, of the faction-fights between the petitioners and abhorers from 1678 to 1682.

Dryden's next great poem was in the nature of a striking contrast to these masculine but

somewhat brutalising satires. It was an argument for the faith of the Church of England as the *via tutissima* between deism and popery, to which he gave the name of *Religio Laici*. It seems as if his thoughts having been directed to the claims of rival creeds, his mind was already hankering after an infallible Church. If this be so, his conversion to Roman Catholicism in the course of the next four years was the result primarily not of an opportunism without scruple, but of a normal process of religious evolution from the period in 1682 when his mind seems to have been first seriously directed towards religious speculation. This line of defence in regard to Dryden's conversion, against the malice of his enemies, was maintained with brilliant success by no less an advocate than Sir Walter Scott. It need not prevent us from acknowledging that the precise manner and season of Dryden's conversion were influenced by a desire to ingratiate himself with James II., or that his new religious manifesto, *The Hind and the Panther*, which was published in 1687, nearly five years after *Religio Laici*, was issued with a view of conciliating the King rather than unburdening his own conscience in regard to the variations in its creed. Both works take a very high place among Dryden's poems, as examples of that wonderful art of reasoning in rhyme in which Dryden was scarcely rivalled by Lucretius. *The Hind and the Panther* naturally excited a good deal of clamour against the author. Two young men destined to fame, Matt Prior and Charles Montague, wrote a parody of it in *The Town and Country Mouse*. The inconsistencies between the new poem and *Religio Laici* were pointed out by industrious pamphleteers, but little heed was paid to the fault which first strikes the modern reader—namely, the grotesque character of the imagery that represents a hind and a panther discoursing at length in couplets upon nice points of theology and Church discipline, while a subaltern allegory represents Father Petre as a martin and the clergy of the Church of England as doves! The court, however, was perfectly satisfied, the piece went through four editions during 1687, and Dryden was set to work upon a translation of *The Life of François Xavier*, which was issued by Tonson with a dedication to the Queen in 1688.

In 1687 appeared the first and, just ten years later, the second, more famous *Ode in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day*, written to music

and celebrating the triumphs of the art, the method employed being a parable describing Alexander the Great's feast in the royal halls of Persepolis, and the effect of Timotheus's harping upon the conqueror's passions; in 1687 also his memorial verses to Anne Killigrew, a noble example of a poem written to commission. Far less pleasing in effect is the official panegyric on the birth of the Prince of Wales in June, 1688, in which the Laureate adopts an ultra-Byzantine posture of adulatory rapture. His flowery predictions were cruelly falsified by the event. The impending revolution naturally gave the death-blow to Dryden's hopes of political place or advancement. The Government which restored Titus Oates to freedom and estate could not be insensible to the "honesty" and merit of Thomas Shadwell, another sufferer in the Whig cause. Dryden's pension was promptly transferred to Tom, and the late Laureate bent prudently and patiently to the storm which he could not resist. To his great honour Dryden grappled with the situation with all the sturdy tenacity of his lymphatic temperament, and in the same spirit which Scott afterwards displayed under similar circumstances. He may probably have reformed his system of living, which can hardly have been other than extravagant. Certain it is that if he could not entirely keep out of debt, he at least kept out of disgrace, and that the years which followed his apparent ruin, if not the brilliant part of his life, were the most honourable and honoured. Debarred from the sunshine of court favour, Dryden naturally turned once more to the theatre, though he always regarded his dramatic work as second best. Yet the two plays that he produced in 1690 proved two of the most vital that ever came from his pen. These were *Don Sebastian*, one of the stateliest of his declamatory dramas, containing a once famous scene (Act IV.) between Sebastian and Dorax, and *Amphitryon*, the most humorous of his adaptations (from Plautus through Molière). The later efforts of the veteran playwright were not so fortunate; *Cleomenes* (1692) was very coldly received, and his last play, *Love Triumphant* (1694), was a deplorable failure.

More congenial and more distinctive work remained for Dryden to do in the sphere of

translation and paraphrase, and his chief publications between 1693 and his death were *The Satires of Juvenal and Persius*, translated into English verse, 1693; *The Works of Virgil*, translated into English verse, July, 1697; and *Fables Ancient and Modern*, translated into verse from Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio (Boccaccio), and Chaucer, 1700. The first of these volumes gave a foretaste merely of Dryden's power and method as a translator. Dryden was a very great metrist and a very great rhetorician, but he was no great Latinist, and he had none of the space and leisure which is indispensable to really scholarly accomplishment. Like most of his work, therefore, his translation bears the impress of his necessities; but so sublime a journeyman was Dryden, so true is it that "his chariot wheels grew hot with driving," that his versions and fables have always ranked among the greatest and most original of his works, and as among the very finest specimens of literary paraphrase in any language. It is good to relate that these versions were warmly welcomed and richly remunerated by the poet's contemporaries.

When his *Fables* appeared, Dryden was an old man, and had suffered a long time with gout and gravel. On April 30th, 1700, *The Postboy* announced that "John Dryden, Esq., the famous poet, lies a-dying." His death was not delayed. The amputation of his leg, which was gangrened, might have saved his life, but Dryden chose rather to resign it; and on Wednesday, May 1st, at three o'clock in the morning, he died at his own house, 43, Gerrard Street, Soho, whither he had moved from Long Acre in 1686. His body was embalmed, and upon Garth's application was deposited "in state" at the College of Physicians. On May 13th (after private burial in St. Anne's, Soho) he was honoured with a public funeral more imposing than English poet had ever received. He was buried in Westminster Abbey by the side of Chaucer and Cowley, near Spenser and Jonson, in "Poets' Corner." His monument there was uncovered in January, 1721.

For a long time Dryden had occupied the presidential chair in the republic of letters. And his authority was at least as unquestioned as that of Sam Johnson seventy, or that of Victor Hugo a hundred and forty, years later.¹

¹ Pepys first met Dryden in the wits' room at Will's Coffee House (1, Bow Street, Covent Garden) as early as 1663, and there the poet was still to be seen thirty years later, with his Chaucerian "down look," his snuffy waistcoat, and his florid but unimpressive countenance. Round his armchair, placed near the fire in

He was moreover, by general consent, the best prose writer and the best poet of his own day, and, down to our own, he is still in many opinions the best prose writer among poets, and the best poet among prose writers. It is a singular fact that when literary authorities were amusing themselves, a score of years ago, in drawing up lists of the hundred best writers, the name of Dryden was wholly omitted, and that the omission was pointed out by a layman as regards literary criticism—to wit, his present Majesty, King Edward VII. Before an international tribunal it may well be doubted whether Dryden would obtain a hearing among the first hundred or even two hundred authors, but where the judges were all Englishmen a poet so characteristically English seemed rather strangely overlooked; yet the strangeness is rather apparent than real, for few writers of Dryden's reputation are so little beloved—so little realised as a man, so little read as an author. People take him on trust, as, indeed, they take most of the literature of his period. Dryden's endowment is, in fact, of the kind which appeals much more to the literary craftsman than to the literary explorer. He shows little creative power, no profound intuition, his inventive gifts are far from striking. The success of his reputation has been to some extent adventitious. He owed the survival of his influence largely to the discipleship of Pope, which was due in no small measure to the accident that both were Catholics. The key thus struck by Pope was maintained during the critical period owing to the enthusiasm of Johnson, Charles Fox, and Sir Walter Scott.

Dryden's most genuine success was achieved by the application of vigorous heroic couplets to the novel purposes of religious argument and keen political satire. This, his gradually developed

art of verse narrative, and his extraordinary technical skill in every branch of his profession, have gained for him his position, that not merely of the literary representative of his age, but of one of the chief pivots in the theory of literary development from Chaucer's time to the present. It is noteworthy that Dryden went on improving to the very last, not only as a playwright and songster, but also as a versifier and critic. At the end of his career he was a perfect master of every literary weapon of which his age comprehended the use. Of his plays it might perhaps be said (as Johnson said of *Irene*) that it is useless to criticise what nobody reads. Dryden turned to Drama as a *gagne-pain*. The perceptive insight and synthetic imagination which it demands were by no means his strong points. As regards the critical essays or Examens, in which the Gallic model was improved upon, it is far otherwise.

Dryden's critical writings, says Mr. Ker, have been less damaged by the lapse of time, and have kept their original freshness better than any literary discourses which can be compared with them. "Every one of his essays contains some independent judgment; his love of literature was instinctive. His mind answered at once to the touch of poetry, and gave in return his estimate of it in the other harmony of prose. There is nothing in literary criticism more satisfactory, merely as a display of literary strength and skill, than the essays in which Dryden's mind is expatiating freely, as in the *Dramatic Poesy* and the preface to the *Fables*, where he faces his adversaries, personal and impersonal, with the security of a man who has confidence in his own powers and in the clearness of his eye. He is at his best when he has set himself to try the value of dogmatic rules and principles—cautious, respectful, seeming to

winter, and out on the balcony in summer, hung delighted listeners—gay young templars, eager to hear the reminiscences of one who could recall roistering suppers with Etherage and Sedley, and Attic evenings with Waller and Cowley and Davenant; who could remember the wit-combats between Charles and Killigrew and the sallies of Nell Gwynn, when she was still mixing strong water for the gentlemen;—students from Oxford and Cambridge who had quitted their books to catch a glimpse of the English Juvenal;—clever lads about town, ambitious for a pinch from his snuff-box, which was, as we are told, equal to a degree in the Academy of Wit;—pleasant humorists, "honest Mr. Swan" the punster, Tom D'Urfey, Browne, and old Sir Roger L'Estrange; men distinguished for their skill in art or science, whom his fame had attracted thither, Ratcliffe, Kneller, and poor Closterman. There were those, who, like himself, had achieved high literary distinction, but who were nevertheless proud to acknowledge him their teacher—Wycherley, Southerne, Congreve, and Vanbrugh; Thomas Creech, whose edition of Lucretius had placed him in the front rank of English scholars; William Walsh, "the best critic in the nation"; George Stepney, whose juvenile poems had made grey authors blush; young Colley Cibber, flushed with the success of his first comedy; and Samuel Garth, whose admirable mock-heroic poem is even now not forgotten. There too were occasionally to be seen those younger men who were to carry on the work he was so soon to lay down, and who were to connect two great ages of English literature.



From a Painting by G. Kneller.

John Dryden

comply with them, till the time comes for the stroke that ends the encounter, and leaves the arena to be cleared for the next antagonist."

As a critic Dryden was primarily occupied with the critical topics of his day. He treats of the heroic poem and of the characteristics which should distinguish it; he expatiates upon "Nature" and the duty of following it; he dilates upon the merits and relative functions of rhyme and blank verse; he discourses upon the unities; he discusses the critical dicta of his predecessors such as Ben Jonson; he insists upon the unchartered excellence of the older English poetry and drama (Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Fletcher); his appreciation of Shakespeare and Jonson is both enthusiastic and expert; he defines wit as a propriety or congruity of thoughts and words; he supports the moderns against the ancients in the great battle of which the first skirmishes were witnessed just before the Restoration.

Dryden's prose *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, written in 1665, touched up two years later and published in 1668, was his first great outstanding work; with the preface to the *Fables* it remains the liveliest and the most stimulating of all his essays. A *compte rendu* of the dramatic theories of the day, it is the first example of comparative English criticism—a criticism genial in manner and not addressed over the heads of the public to a starchy bench of scholars, but challenging an open verdict from the literary world at large. His characters of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson are models of happy and discriminating criticism; Neander's defence of rhyme is a masterpiece of ingenious reasoning. Excellent as it is, however, Dryden's critical power is seen in an even more favourable light in his introduction to the *Fables* of 1700, in which he sets forth his views of Chaucer, Ovid, and Boccaccio. He also expresses a noble contrition for the faults of taste in his plays, while uttering a dignified protest against the unmannerly zeal of Jeremy Collier's attack upon the drama and everything connected therewith.

For the last word in appreciation of Dryden's prose, and one that comprehends practically everything that may most fitly be said, we draw upon one of the most felicitous passages in what is perhaps the finest essay in Dr. Johnson's best book: "Criticism, either didactic or defensive, occupies almost all his prose, except those pages which he has devoted to his

patrons; but none of his prefaces were ever thought tedious. They have not the formality of a settled style in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little, is gay; what is great, is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Everything is excused by the play of images and the spriteliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though since his earlier works more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete."

After the heroic plays of Dryden, *The Mourning Bride* of Congreve and the *Venice Preserved* of Otway occupy the first place in traditional repute as far as this genre is concerned. Congreve's one tragedy, produced in 1697, is chiefly remembered now for its opening verses:

Music has charms to soothe the savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak,

and for the passage describing a cathedral, which Johnson with extravagant praise lauded beyond any poetical passage in the whole of the English drama. The play certainly reveals a tragic power in Congreve which is not wholly absent even from some of his comedies, such as *The Double Dealer*; yet the verse as a whole is deplorably stilted, and Congreve is sadly hampered by the formality in the French style, or rather an affectation of it in which a semblance of fine writing has to do duty for true passion and genuine feeling. Yet "paltry as it is when compared, we do not say with *Lear* or *Macbeth*, but with the best dramas of Massinger and Ford, *The Mourning Bride* stands very high among the tragedies of the age in which it was written," and it undoubtedly proved one of the most successful dramas of its day. The part of Almeria remained popular until the eighteenth century was well advanced. If the tragedy were revived now, says Leigh Hunt, the audience would laugh at its inflated sentences and unconscious prose.

Thomas Otway, son of the Rev. Humphrey Otway, was born on March 3rd, 1652, at Trotton, near Midhurst, and was educated at

Winchester and Christ Church. But the prospect of a living was cut away from him, and we find him in London in 1671 poor and needy. In 1675 he produced his boyish play *Alcibiades* and this led to Rochester taking him up under the delusive hope that he had at last discovered a serious rival to Dryden. Under such auspices he produced his rhymed tragedy of *Don Carlos*, the success of which may have temporarily annoyed Dryden. This was followed in 1680 by *Caius Marius*, a grotesque adaptation from *Romeo and Juliet*. In the meantime, despairing of any substantial gain from the patronage of Rochester, whose jealousy was excited by his philandering with Mrs. Barry, Otway served two campaigns in Flanders. His talent seems to have been invigorated in some way, for, in the same year that he produced the wretched travesty of *Caius Marius*, he first showed his remarkable gift of declamation and stage pathos in *The Orphan*, a sensational play of some power, for which hints were obviously derived from *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *A King and No King*, and *Cymbeline*, though by such a talent as Otway's the conceptions of a Fletcher or a Shakespeare could not fail to be vulgarised, coarsened, and de-supernaturalised. In 1682, from Saint Réal's classical and mainly imaginary narrative of the *Conjuraton de Venise*, Otway derived the colour and setting for his ambitious tragedy of *Venice Preserved*. Full of sublimated rant and spurious pathos, *Venice Preserved* is fitted only for the garish light of the theatre.

The closing scenes of Otway's life (April, 1685) are more pathetic than any of his dramas. He made £100 each at least by the most successful of these; but his manners were extravagant, and he gamed and drank away large sums. One day he went into a coffee-house in a starving condition and begged a shilling of a gentleman, who, distressed at his wretched state, gave him a guinea. Otway rushed off to a baker's shop, bought a roll, and was choked while rapidly swallowing the first mouthful. Pathetic in this connection are the words of Wood (originally used of George Peele) as cited by Dr. Birkbeck Hill: "When or where he died I cannot tell; for so it is and alway hath been, that most poets die poor and consequently obscurely, and a hard matter it is to trace them to their graves."

The career of Nathaniel Lee affords a curious parallel to that of Otway. He was well educated at Westminster and Trinity, Cam-

bridge, but his career was blighted by early dissipation and an excessive fondness for the stage, complicated in his case by a strain of insanity. In the intervals of Bedlam and intoxication he wrote *The Rival Queens* (Roxana and Statira), or *Alexander* (1677), an old stage favourite, in blank verse, and another successful tragedy, *Mithridates*, in the following year. In two plays, *Ædipus* and *The Duke of Guise*, in which Shaftesbury was attacked, he collaborated with Dryden. Lee's habitual rant mounts occasionally almost into the regions of the Marlowesque. He was almost persuaded to be a poet. Unfortunately, as in the somewhat similar case of Christopher Smart, it is very difficult to distinguish his tumidity from sheer lunacy. There could not be so much smoke without a certain amount of fire, and so we may perhaps allow with Addison that there is "infinite fire" but greatly "involved." As with Otway, poor Lee died a piteous death, the details of which are diversely given. He got lost in the snow and died of exposure, but whether he was a fugitive from the mad-house or a strayed reveller from some tavern is a disputed point. He was buried in the parish church of St. Clement Danes on May 6th, 1692.

In Southerne, Rowe, and Lillo we get into lower and lower strata of "heroic" tragedy. Thomas Southerne was born in the year of the Restoration at Oxmantown, near Dublin, and studied at Trinity College, Dublin; but came to England in 1678, and enrolled himself at the Middle Temple as a student of law. He won the esteem of Dryden, who wrote a prologue for his *Loyal Brother* (1682, a compliment to the Duke of York), was friendly with Pope, and lived to become acquainted with Gray. He is said to have fought on the winning side at Sedgemoor. He was certainly a Nestor among playwrights, and wrote two plays which proved wholly to the taste of the ages of Pope and Johnson. *Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage* (1694) was based upon Aphra Behn's romance of *The Nun*. *Oroonoko* (1696) is similarly based upon the novel by Mrs. Behn. Both plays are didactic, *Isabella* denouncing paternal partiality and *Oroonoko* the horrors of the slave trade. "Respected as a relic of the past, a decorous church-goer with silver hair, Southerne lived far into the eighteenth century (1746), and came sufficiently under its influences to repent his mingling of tragic and comic action in the same piece; which indeed he had reason to

regret, not because he had done it, but because he had not done it better."

Nicholas Rowe was one of Busby's pupils at Westminster, and entered, after he left school, at the Middle Temple. At twenty-five he produced his first tragedy, *The Ambitious Step-mother*, followed in 1702 by *Tamerlane*, in which the distance traversed by English drama since Marlowe can be realised. *Tamerlane* is a magnanimous and very sentimental hero, who is evidently aping the manner and phraseology of the great Elizabethans. His character was drawn with the patriotic intention of representing "the deliverer" William, while Louis XIV. was caricatured as Bajazet. As Johnson said, "our quarrel with Louis has been long over, and it now gratifies neither zeal nor malice to see him painted with aggravated features like a Saracen upon a sign." In 1705 Rowe attempted a comedy, *The Biter*, which caused its inventor intense mirth, but was not appreciated by an audience. He returned to the grand tragic manner, and wrote *Jane Shore* in "imitation of Shakespeare's style." Pope deplored that he should have "professedly imitated the style of a bad age." His last tragedy was *Lady Jane Grey* (1715). In the meantime he had brought out

the first octavo edition of Shakespeare's works in 1708 with a few notes and emendations, and a life of the author "such as tradition then almost expiring could supply." Rowe was successful with his own party, the Whigs, from whom he obtained several good sinecures in addition to the post of Poet Laureate (August 1st, 1715). "A gentleman," says Dennis, "who loved to lie in bed all day for his ease and sit up all night for his pleasure," Rowe adorned his leisure by preparing a version of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which Johnson (fresh from the congenial task of belabouring *Lycidas*) describes in an ecstasy of exaggeration as "one of the greatest productions of English poetry." Of his plays the same critic observes: "He seldom pierces the breast, but he always delights the ear and often improves the understanding." Rowe died in December, 1718, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, "over against Chaucer." His best known piece, *The Fair Penitent* (1718), reads almost like a travesty of a past Elizabethan drama—all is sentimental and turgid. The blank verse, however, is smooth and literary, and the long speeches are generally rounded off with end-stopped couplets.¹

¹ Select plays of Dryden and Otway may be studied in the Mermaid Library. Of Dryden's poems there are excellent editions: the Globe (ed. Christie) and the Aldine (ed. Hooper). The *Satires* have also been edited by Prof. Churton Collins; select *Poems* (*Cromwell*, *Astræa*, *Annus*, *Absalom*, *Religio*, *Hind and Panther*) by Christie and Firth (Clarendon Press); *The Hind and the Panther* by W. H. Williams, 1900; while of Dryden's prose, the critical *Essays** have been finely edited by Prof. Ker (2 vols., 1900). The standard edition since the eighteenth-century work of Malone is that of Sir Walter Scott, as revised by Prof. Saintsbury (author of *Dryden* in "Men of Letters" and in "Chambers"). The racy *Lives* of Dryden, Otway, and Rowe should be read in Dr. Birkbeck Hill's edition of *Johnson's Lives** (Oxford, 1905). See also Baker's *Biographia Dramatica*, L. N. Chase's *English Heroic Play*, 1903, Beljame and Taine (cited in Book IV. Chap. I.), Lowell's essay on Dryden in *Among my Books*, the *Life* of Otway in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, and Dr. Garnett's *Age of Dryden*.* Matthew Arnold, in his Preface to the *Six Chief Lives* of Johnson, speaks up well for Dryden as a mighty worker for the age of prose. "Let us always bear in mind that the century so well represented by Dryden, Addison, Pope, and Swift, and of which the literary history is so powerfully written by Johnson in his *Lives*, is a century of prose—a century of which the great work in literature was the formation of English prose. . . . It is the victory of this prose style, 'clear, plain, and short,' over what Burnet calls 'the old style, long and heavy,' which is the distinguished achievement, in the history of English letters, of the century following the Restoration. From the first it proceeded rapidly and was never checked. Burnet says of the Chancellor Finch, Earl of Nottingham: 'He was long much admired for his eloquence, but it was laboured and affected, and he saw it much despised before he died.' A like revolution of taste brought about a general condemnation of our old prose style, imperfectly disengaged from the style of poetry. By Johnson's time the new style, the style of prose, was altogether paramount in its own proper domain, and in its pride of victorious strength had invaded also the domain of poetry."

CHAPTER III

THE COMIC DRAMATISTS OF THE RESTORATION

"He wrote only a few plays, but they are excellent in their kind. The laws of the drama are strictly observed in them. They abound in characters, all of which are shadowed with the utmost delicacy, and we don't meet with so much as one low or coarse jest. The language is everywhere that of men of fashion, but their actions are those of knaves, a proof that he was perfectly well acquainted with human nature, and frequented what we call polite society."—VOLTAIRE on Congreve.

"I do not know how it is with others, but I feel the better always for the perusal of one of Congreve's—nay, why should I not add even of Wycherley's comedies. I am the gayer at least for it; and I could never connect those sports of a witty fancy in any shape with any result to be drawn from them to imitation in real life."—CHARLES LAMB, *On the Artificial Comedy of the Last Century*.

French models—The Restoration stage—Etherege—Wycherley—Sedley—Crowne—Shadwell—
Congreve—Farquhar—Vanbrugh—The Collier controversy.

PASSING from the stage of Shakespeare to that of Dryden we appear to have suddenly entered a new world. The representatives of the drama seem instantly transformed by some Circean potion into beings of a lower type. The mere fact that the drama had been proscribed by the Puritans created a furore for plays among the Royalists. No time was lost in dragging old favourites by Jonson and Fletcher out of the seclusion in which they had remained for over twenty years. But these plays were so little adapted to the manners of 1660 that it soon became the fashion to regard them as antediluvian. The two play-houses, which were all that were licensed in the capital upon the Restoration, depended primarily upon the patronage of the court; and Charles II. was neither indisposed nor wholly unfitted to become an arbiter of dramatic excellence. Inaccessible as he was to the deeper human emotions, and without a grain of poetry in his composition, he was nevertheless a man of exceptional wit and with an exquisite taste and polish. It was not likely that Charles would find Shakespeare and the other dramatists before the flood very much to his taste. His capacity

for being bored by the favourite dramatist of his martyred father is, there is little doubt, very accurately illustrated in the pages of *Woodstock*. He and his court had returned from the Continent, where they had become thoroughly imbued with the French taste; and they now looked forward to declamatory tragedy, embodying ideals of supernatural virtue and self-sacrifice, and couched in rhymed couplets approaching as near as possible to the French model. The contemporary taste for extravagant heroic romances such as those of Madame de Scuderi confirmed the capricious taste of a selfish and debauched society for a morbid and impossible virtue. As regards comedy the popular taste took the more simple and intelligible form of a desire for an accurate presentment of contemporary manners, drawing its material from society and not from nature, and consequently depending on wit rather than on humour. The evolution of stage architecture, by means of which plays were now produced no longer upon an exposed stage or platform but rather as a picture in a frame, the introduction of movable scenery, and the substitution of women for boys in female parts¹

¹ Edward Kynaston, who played Evadne in *The Maid's Tragedy* in 1661, is believed to have been one of the last male actors of women's parts on the English stage. According to Pepys he was both the prettiest woman and the handsomest man on the boards. Another famous actor in feminine rôles was James Nokes, called "Nurse Nokes," from his part in *Romeo and Juliet*. The ladies soon took their revenge by playing men's parts, to the unconcealed joy of Mr. Pepys.

which now became common, all this aided by French models, of which it is true that the English made a very blundering use, led rapidly to a conception of comedy far removed from that of the favourite Fletcher or the still redoubted Ben Jonson. As the taste for spectacle, for music, and for rhyming heroics was inseparable from the new tragedy, so the

foppish airs, the filthy language, and the eternal pursuit of women proper to the contemporary gallant, became the regular staple of the Restoration comedy. The scene was invariably laid either in the metropolis or its suburbs.¹

Of the first generation of this comedy, apart from Dryden, the most typical representatives

¹ Just before the Puritan revolution of the Civil War closed down the theatres, the stage in England seems to have been in a prosperous condition. There were at least five companies playing pretty regularly: the King's Servants at the Globe (Blackfriars in winter); the Queen's Servants at the Cockpit, Drury Lane; the Prince's Servants in Salisbury Court; two inferior companies at the Fortune and the Red Bull. When the Civil War broke out, the actors, as might have been expected, ranged themselves on the side of the King. Many of them went into the royal army: John Lowin, a famous Falstaff, took an inn called the Three Pigeons, at Brentford, and died very old and very poor. Wild Robinson was assassinated by the enthusiast Harrison (vide *Woodstock*), who shot him through the head, after he had laid down his arms, exclaiming, "Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently." In 1647 all public stages were pulled down, and by an Act of February 11th, 1648, all actors convicted of acting were to be publicly whipped, and all spectators for each offence fined 5s. Many actors must have nearly starved, though Cromwell seems to have connived at a certain amount of furtive activity on the part of the old players. In March, 1660, during the dictatorship of General Monk, a bookseller, John Rhodes, obtained a licence and opened a small theatre, the Cockpit, in Drury Lane, where Betterton and Kynaston appeared. Rival houses were soon set up at the Red Bull and at Salisbury Court. All these performed under the authority of the Master of the Revels; but in August, 1660, the monopoly was shattered by the issue of a grant empowering Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant to erect two companies of players for the representation of plays in convenient places. After a complicated triangular duel between the Master of the Revels, Davenant, and Killigrew, by December, 1660, all the chief available actors were grouped under two flags: Betterton and the majority of Rhodes's troupe under Davenant at Salisbury Court; while Kynaston joined Mohun, Hart, Clun, and the old actors, as they were called (several of them had been trained at Blackfriars), who took service under Killigrew in Vere Street, Clare Market. Davenant soon removed to a house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, while Killigrew established himself in the New Theatre, or Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in April, 1663. The internal arrangements of the theatre changed rather rapidly between 1660 and 1700. At the former date the playhouses had many points of contact with the private, or candle-light, houses under Queen Elizabeth. By 1700 it approximated much more nearly to the theatre of the present day. When Charles II. was chief stage patron, and Mr. Pepys an assiduous playgoer, the pieces were still advertised on the street-posts—the posts which Dr. Johnson used to touch with his stick as he walked along. During the three last decades of the seventeenth century the time of performance changed rather rapidly from three or half-past to six in the afternoon. The doors were thrown open at noon, and the leisurely playgoers of that time frequently wasted half a day sitting in their places. A little later, between 1670 and 1680, rich people would send lackeys to keep a place for them to witness a new play. After the epilogue, the actors announced the details of their next performance. The author generally took his benefit on the third performance of his piece. All authors were free of the theatre in those days, and dead-heads of other kinds seem to have been only too numerous. The floor of the house was devoted to the half-crown pit; slightly raised above this was a tier of four-shilling boxes, above this the eighteen-penny or middle gallery—notorious as the haunt of vizard masks ("Some there are," says Dryden, "who take their degrees of lewdness in our middle galleries"). Above were "the gods" of the shilling gallery, to which footmen were admitted gratis at the end of the fourth act—later, by 1700, to witness the whole play. The wits and beaux congregated chiefly in the pit, a separate corner of which was consecrated to the fops, who often made such a noise that the players could hardly make themselves heard. But ladies often penetrated to the pit, and shared the manners of the place. "Sitting behind in the pit, in a dark place," says Mr. Pepys, "a lady spit backward upon me by a mistake, not seeing me; but, after seeing her to be a very pretty lady, I was not troubled at it at all." The stage still extended, but to a decreasing extent, like a flattened U into the auditorium, and one of the players' entrances at least on each side was in front of the curtain, which was drawn sideways from the centre. Owing to the experience gained from the court masques arranged by Inigo Jones, the scenic arrangements had been greatly developed since the days of Ben Jonson. The stage was lighted from above by branches or hoops of candles suspended from the ceiling. The day had passed when the gallants mounted upon the stage, and aired their finery or drank their tobacco under the gaze of the audience. The "Fop Alley" to which Davenant alludes appears to have been the passage between the orchestra and the front row of the pit, from which between the acts the fine gentlemen ogled the boxes. The make-up of the actors was, as regards effect, probably much the same as at present. A huge periwig crowned the head of each actor, and uncomplimentary wits were taunted with being less able to judge a play than a peruke. As regards costume, no pretension was made to historical accuracy, and Henry V. wore the cast-off clothes of Charles II. Little advance, in fact, was made in this respect until long after the time of Garrick, who, as we know, played Macbeth in a scarlet military uniform (for an excellent summary, see *Thomas Betterton*,* by R. W. Lowe).

are Etherege, Wycherley, Sedley, Crowne, and Shadwell. Sir George Etherege was a man of fashion and a courtier, who had been much in Paris, and was familiar with all the devices of the French stage, and his plays are of historical importance as prototypes of the comedies of manners so brilliantly developed in the next generation by Congreve. His first comedy, *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, appeared as early as 1664; but his best play, *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*, was only given to the world twelve years later, in 1676. The personification of the fashionable coxcomb in the title-rôle is said to have been the image of the author, while the heartless rake Dorimant is believed to have been a study from Rochester. But Sir Fopling is more interesting as the ancestor of Vanbrugh's Lord Foppington; as for Dorimant, he is perfectly anticipatory of the foreheads of bronze, hearts like the nether millstone, and tongues set on fire of hell, which the comic dramatists of the Restoration took such a peculiar pleasure in depicting. Both as a mirror of the time and as a piece of stage construction, Etherege's comedy marks an advance upon its predecessors. His plays suffer from a deficiency of plot, a deficiency of wit, and a superfluity of naughtiness; beastliness drops from them like honey from the comb; yet they cannot be denied to possess a light airy grace, and to have imbibed something of the manner though little of the humour of Molière.

But the first real master of this earthy sensual and devilish comedy, as Macaulay calls it, was William Wycherley, the son of a Shropshire squire, who has achieved the reputation of being the coarsest writer that ever polluted the English stage—unless, indeed, an even lower deep was sounded by the fair Aphra Behn—peace be with her ashes! Being sent to France during the Revolution, he became a Catholic; but recanted finally, if Pope may be believed, to recant again. He had learnt of M. de Montausier the art of wearing gloves and a peruke, which sufficed in those days to make a gentleman. This merit and the success of a filthy piece, *Love in a Wood*, first produced in the spring of 1671, but possibly written earlier, drew upon him the attentions of the Duchess of Cleveland, and the *maitresse* procured the

indulgence of the King. Lely's portrait testifies to Wycherley's good looks and the absurd fables which he circulated about his early work are sufficient evidence of his vanity; but the French polish to which he set up a claim is not very highly estimated by the best judges. He may be likened, indeed, to the donkey in the fable imitating the gambols of the lap-dog. His *Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1671-2), which borrows the leading idea from Calderon, has not unjustly been styled by Hazlitt a long and foolish farce. Poor though it was, it was decidedly superior to *Love in a Wood*.

That Wycherley had benefited by his experience is shown in his next and most brilliant comedy, *The Country Wife*. In this he shows a strong stage sense. The two chief parts of Pinchwife and Horner are striking creations. The preliminary dialogue of Act I. is brilliant in itself, and admirably adapted to the atmosphere of the play. The gallants are most skilfully grouped, and the coxcomb Sparkish is a really humorous conception. Charged with malicious intention and with *esprit du diable*, the piece abounds in opportunities for a competent troupe of actors. Its one drawback is that its loathsome character, topic, and treatment alike render it absolutely unactable.

A viler parody of characters and situations suggested by dramatic genius of the highest order can hardly be found anywhere than in Wycherley's last comedy, *The Plain Dealer*, acted in 1674 and printed three years later. Ideas in this are deliberately taken from *Twelfth Night* and from Racine's *Plaideurs*. The groundwork is based upon Molière's *Misanthrope*, while the criticism and defence of the coarseness of *The Country Wife* is evidently suggested by Molière's brilliant comedy, *Le Critique de l'École des Femmes*. "Quantum mutatus ab illo!" As an acting play, this queer medley is far inferior to *The Country Wife*. Many of the scenes are dull, brutal, and heavy; but there are some good indications of character, especially in the Widow and Jerry Blackacre, in whom hints have been found for Tony Lumpkin and his mamma. The moral obtuseness of Wycherley is finely illustrated by Macaulay when he compares Wycherley's hero. Manly with Molière's Alceste.¹ "Wycherley

¹ The end of the plain dealer himself—of "manly Wycherley," as his contemporaries called him—was not unfitting such an egregious champion of misanthropy, obscenity, and libertinage. He incurred the King's disfavour by a marriage above his rank, was imprisoned for debt upon the lady's death, turned Papist, and lost

borrowed *Alceste*, and turned him into a ferocious sensualist, who believed himself as great a rascal as he thought everybody else. So depraved was his moral taste that, while he firmly believed that he was producing a picture of virtue too exalted for the commerce of this world, he was really delineating the greatest rascal that is to be found even in his own writings."

Of the remaining comedy contemporary with that of Wycherley it is necessary to do little more than mention *The Mulberry Garden*, a slender comedy by the witty talker Sir Charles Sedley (1639—1701). *The Mulberry Garden*, which owed something to Molière's *École des Maris*, was given in 1668, and, in spite of its gross impropriety, could elicit even from Mr. Pepys no more praise than "here and there a good thing." More urbane is a stage-play which marks the close of the first period of Restoration comedy, the *Sir Courtly Nice* of Crowne—"little starch Johnnie Crowne," as Rochester called him. Charles II. gave the author a plot derived from a Spanish comedy by Moreto (1661). Charles I., it will be remembered, rendered the same service to Shirley. But old Rowley died on the eve of its production, and so gave Crowne an excuse for bitterly complaining of the non-fulfilment of a promise ("to see about getting him a place") by one who was perhaps the most faithless not only of men, but even of kings.

Between these two comedies of 1668 and 1685 we must leave a short space in our chronology for the humorous comedies of Thomas Shadwell, an inedited dramatist who is now remembered less as having inherited the mantle of Ben Jonson than as having succeeded to the drugget of Flecknoe. Three imitations from the French—*The Sullen Lovers* (1668), *The Miser*, and *The Libertine*—based in the main upon Molière—were followed by some original and, upon the whole, more vigorous plays such as *Epsom Wells* (1676), *The Lancashire Witches*, *Bury Fair*, and *The Squire of Alsatia* (1689), this last play dealing with the evil fame of the sanctuary of Whitefriars, and supplying many hints to *The Fortunes of Nigel*. The worthy "Og" was a capital talker, but his wit deserted him when he tried to write. He excels, however, in Smollettian sketches of the coarser

humour of Restoration London. He prided himself on introducing not less than four new humours into each comedy. *The Squire of Alsatia* needs a glossary of cant words to make it intelligible to the reader. *The Scourers* is loaded with Gargantuan descriptions of the delicacies of the various seasons. *The Lancashire Witches* is full of folk-lore and dialect, in order to explain which, when the play was printed, the author provided a series of erudite notes. As a collector of strange expressions and forms of life Shadwell indeed showed himself no unworthy imitator of Ben Jonson, Dekker, or the omniscient author of *Lenten Stuff*, the puzzling Tom Nash.

The interval which separates *Peregrine Pickle* from *Tristram Shandy* is hardly more marked than that which separates a play such as Wycherley's *Plain Dealer* (1674) from the first comedy, *The Old Bachelor* (1693), of William Congreve. The depravity of the Revolution drama is perhaps more dangerous than the obscenity and ferocious coarseness of the Restoration drama properly so-called; so much more attractive and insidious is the innuendo of Congreve than the outspoken grossness and satirical savagery of Wycherley. The substitution of wit for satire, of *double-entendre* for verbal brutality, is thoroughly indicative of the polishing process which had been going on since 1660. On leaving Shadwell and Wycherley and coming to Congreve, we feel, at any rate, as Macaulay says, that the worst is over; that we are one remove farther from the Restoration; that we have passed the nadir of national taste and morality.

William Congreve was born at Bardsey, near Leeds, in February, 1670. His father, a cadet of an old Staffordshire family, had distinguished himself among the cavaliers in the Civil War, was set down after the Restoration for the order of the Royal Oak, and subsequently settled in Ireland under the patronage of the Earl of Burlington. "Harmonious Congreve" passed his childhood at Youghal, went to school at Kilkenny (the school of Swift and Berkeley), and completed an excellent education at Trinity College, Dublin, and the Middle Temple. Congreve troubled himself little about pleading, however, and gave himself up to literature and society, in which his wit, looks, and cool egotism

the art of flattery. His last act, ten days before his death at the age of seventy-five, was to marry a girl of sixteen in order to cut his nephew out of the succession. He died in December, 1715, and was buried near Samuel Butler in the vault of St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

admirably fitted him to shine. His ambition was to double the part of exquisite and man of letters. The history of his life is the history of a conflict between these two impulses. He inclined as he grew older to give a strong preference to the fine gentleman—a coxcombry which elicited the excellent reproof of Voltaire: "If you had been a mere private gentleman, I should not have come to see you."

Congreve's success as a dramatist was almost as rapid and as undisputed as that of Sheridan. The ease with which he professed his work to be done is probably just about as delusive.¹ It was in the autumn of 1692 that Congreve submitted his first play, *The Old Batchelor*, to Dryden. Dryden, whose generosity as a critic is notorious, said that he had never read such a first play, and lent his services to shape it for production at Drury Lane in January, 1693. It was a great success, and was worth a place to Congreve from Charles Montague, then a Lord of the Treasury, to whom Congreve dedicated his second play, *The Double Dealer*, a much more considerable effort. *Love for Love*, his most vivacious stage comedy, was given at Betterton's new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1695. His sole tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, appeared in 1697, and his last piece, *The Way of the World*, in 1700. After this he left "the ungrateful stage" partly owing to the annoyance of his awkward controversy with Jeremy Collier. Lost to the stage at thirty, Congreve became the Beau Nash of the literary world. "Regarded as an extinct volcano, he gave umbrage to no rivals; his urbane and undemonstrative temper kept him out of literary feuds; all agreed to adore so benign and inoffensive a deity, and the general respect of the lettered world culminated in Pope's dedication of his *Homer* to him—the most splendid literary tribute the age could bestow. Sinecure Government places made his circumstances more than easy; but he suffered continually from gout, the effect of free living, and he became blind, or nearly so, in his latter years." Of the liaisons formed by Congreve with the actresses of the period, the most notable was

that between him and the fascinating Mrs. Bracegirdle, for whom he created such parts as Araminta, Angelica, Cynthia, and Millamant. But in his premature old age he deserted her for a haughtier beauty, Henrietta, the sole daughter of the Great Duke of Marlborough, to whom he left the bulk of his fortune of £10,000. He died at his house in London on January 19th, 1730, and the Duchess spent his legacy on a diamond necklace, an ivory image of the poet, and a gorgeous funeral and monument in Westminster Abbey; while poor Bracegirdle went shabby, and the Congreve family are said to have been left in a most poetical distress.

Sir Fopling Flutter, Dorimant, Sparkish, and Sir Courtly Nice—it was among such parts as these, and not among the ruder satire of *The Plain Dealer* or *Epsom Wells*, that Congreve sought for the development of his comedy.² The critics are usually so pre-occupied with the wit and repartee of Congreve's comedy that they have perhaps been in some danger of ignoring the humour which is seldom absent amidst all the superficial glitter. As a matter of fact, the two qualities are so compounded in Congreve as to form the best possible amalgam for purposes of the comic stage. It has been said of Mr. Meredith that he cannot refrain from making the most unlikely of his characters witty, but makes them all alike utter epigrams culled from *The Pilgrim's Scrip*. The same thing applies to Congreve, who makes of Jeremy, a servant in *Love for Love*, one of the wittiest figures in the whole realm of English drama. This seems a rather too literal adaptation of the Molièresque valet, yet the whole of this play is sparkling with wit and gaiety from beginning to end. The plot is so incoherent as to raise the piece little, if at all, above the level of a farce—a plot was indeed an after-thought with Congreve; but the dialogue is so sparkling, and each one of the characters so entertaining, that *Love for Love* is probably on the whole the brightest and most playable of Congreve's plays (it made a record run of thirteen consecutive nights), though it yields in intellectuality, and in the gossamer wit of the

¹ "There is a strange affectation in authors of appearing to have done everything by chance. *The Old Batchelor* was written for amusement in the languor of convalescence." Yet it is composed, says Johnson, with great elaboration of dialogue and "incessant ambition of wit."

² He was, of course, thoroughly conversant with the Latin and the French comic drama, and he was able to reproduce, not only the form of the latter, as when he adopted the plan of changing the scene upon the entrance and exit of each character, but also to a considerable extent its external polish and verba refinement.

dialogue, to Congreve's last comedy, *The Way of the World*. For a stage scene it is almost impossible to beat that in which Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail arrive at mutual understanding, or that in which Tattle illustrates to Scandal the importance of delicacy in treating a lady's reputation. But the relations between Mirabel and Mrs. Millamant in *The Way of the World* have a more subtle interest for the understanding. The intricacy of the plot, and the distilled irony in much of the dialogue, exact an amount of attention which seems at times hardly consistent with the traffic of the stage; yet, taken as a whole, *The Way of the World* attains to the high-water mark of English comedy, or, as Mr. Swinburne calls it, "final and flawless comedy." It might be called the conquest of a town coquette, and Millamant is a perfect coquette. It is a piece of genius in a writer to make a woman's manner of speech betray her. Yet you feel sensible of Millamant's mutinous presence, haughty mouth, bewitching lips, from the moment when she comes on "full-sail with her fan spread and her streamers out and a shoal of fools for tenders, until she finally consents to dwindle into a wife." She has all the charm that springs from the frivolity without the fragility or the febrility of "Frou-Frou." Crispness of style is perfected in Congreve. He is at once precise and voluble—exquisite combination, so rare in English. Sheridan imitates him, but as a limb of Molière would (*teste* Swinburne) have sufficed to make a Congreve, so a limb of Congreve, or of Vanbrugh either for that matter, would have sufficed to make a Sheridan.

George Farquhar (1678—1707), whose work extends into the early years of Queen Anne's reign, was the son of a parson, and was born at Londonderry in 1678. He forsook Trinity College, Dublin, for the stage; but he gave up acting owing to an accident with a sword, which had nearly proved fatal to a brother actor in the course of a stage duel. He obtained a commission as captain in Lord Orrery's regiment; but left the army in order to marry a girl who fell in love with his appearance, and to obtain her end falsely gave herself out to be an heiress. Another disappointment came to him through the non-fulfilment of the promise by Ormonde to get him another regiment. Farquhar came to London in 1699 with a few guineas in his pocket, and found it necessary to write for his living. His

plays consequently came out in rapid succession, and, in spite of the ill-luck of their author (who also acted some of their leading rôles), they have much more good humour in them than those of Wycherley or Congreve. *Love in a Bottle*, his first play, given in 1699, has not much to recommend it save its gaiety and rattle. *The Constant Couple* (1700) and *Sir Harry Wildair* have more character about them.

Farquhar improved upon all his previous work in *The Recruiting Officer* of 1706; but his best play, by common consent, is the last, *The Beaux' Stratagem*, written shortly before his death. The scene in *The Recruiting Officer*, in which Sergeant Kite cajoles two honest fellows into the belief that they are willing to serve their Queen, is typical of Farquhar's breezy style. But *The Beaux' Stratagem* is livelier still in the variety of its incidents and characters. The rascally landlord Boniface, Squire Sullen, and the inimitable servant Scrub; Gibbet the highwayman, the impudent Archer, and the Irish-French Jesuit, Father Foigard—all these supply parts which were keenly appreciated both by actors and audiences throughout the eighteenth century. The scene is laid at Lichfield, and the room in the George Inn, in which Boniface entertained Aimwell, and where Farquhar is believed to have stayed, is still pointed out.

Sir John Vanbrugh, playwright and architect, born in the parish of St. Nicholas Acons, London, in January, 1664, was the son of Giles Vanbrugh, who married in 1660 the youngest daughter of Sir Dudley Carleton. The production of Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* at the Theatre Royal in January, 1696, supplied a play to Vanbrugh on which to hang his first acted comedy. He thought that it would be interesting to develop the situation upon which Cibber had rung down the curtain, and the result was *The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*, given at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on Boxing Day, 1696. The leading rôles in *The Relapse*—Lord Foppington, Sir Tunbely Clumsey, his daughter Miss Hoyden, and the maid Abigail—at once established themselves in popular favour, and the piece remained a prime favourite throughout the eighteenth century. Sheridan's *A Trip to Scarborough* is one of the numerous transformations through which it has passed. Lord Foppington was splendidly played by Cibber;

and as a typical fop, he is perhaps the best of the line commenced by Etherege's Sir Fopling Flutter, Crowne's Sir Courtly Nice, and Cibber's own Sir Novelty Fashion, and continued in such parts as Ogleby, Dundreary, and Beau Austin. The vivacity of *The Relapse*, which springs from Vanbrugh's happy knack of improvising upon a situation, is maintained in the stronger and more original play, *The Provoked Wife*, famous for the parts of Sir John Brute and Lady Brute. Sir John, a bully and a wife-beater, a peevish sot, a quarrelsome and rake-helly coward, is undoubtedly one of the most repulsive figures ever seen on any stage, yet the part seems to have been grandly played by Betterton, and created a great impression. It was long afterwards the favourite part of Garrick, who was in the drunken scene, says Hazlitt, inimitable. Even more effective and exhilarating to the modern reader are the scenes between the affected Lady Fanciful and her sycophantic French maid. There is a spontaneous gaiety and ease about these scenes which was new to the English stage. Vanbrugh is indeed one of the few men who has known how to transplant the very delicate and delightful stage prattle of France across the Channel.

Vanbrugh's unmoral levity reaches its climax in *The Confederacy*, a comedy combining

an infinite contrivance and intrigue with a matchless spirit of impudence. Corinna, the heroine, was by her own admission "a devilish girl at bottom." As for the hero, Dick Amlet, an incipient Barry Lyndon, he is surely one of the drollest, most adroit, and most brazen knaves that ever strutted on the boards. Vanbrugh's remaining comedies—*Æsop*, *The False Friend*, *The Mistake*, *The Country House*, and *A Journey to London*—are comparatively little read and unimportant. *Æsop*, in two parts, a successful adaptation from M. Boursault, was given at Drury Lane in 1697; *The False Friend* (1702) was derived from the Spanish through Le Sage; *The Mistake* (1705) was a rapid adaptation from Molière's *Dépit Amoureux*; *The Country House* (1705), like *The Confederacy*, was based upon a comedy by the popular French playwright Dancourt. *The Journey to London*, a light comedy which promised well, was left at his death in a fragmentary condition; but was finished by Colley Cibber as *The Provoked Husband*, and given with great success at the Lane on January 10th, 1728, running twenty-eight nights! Both this play and *The Provoked Wife* were accorded the honours of a French version.¹

"The broad and robust humour of Vanbrugh's comedies," says Mr. Swinburne, "gives him a place at the master's (Congreve's) right

¹ From 1701, when he commenced building Castle Howard for Lord Carlisle, "Van" was seriously distracted from the stage by his grandiose work as an architect. In 1703 he designed and built a theatre for himself at the lower end of the Haymarket. This was specially constructed for opera (the Italian development of masque), of which he was one of the earliest patrons in this country; but the theatre showed grave acoustic defects, and Vanbrugh was very glad to transfer his interest in the concern to another party; this was in 1708, three years after the Haymarket Opera House was opened. In the meantime, he had commenced work upon the vast palace which it was proposed to erect for Marlborough at Woodstock in commemoration of the victory of Blenheim. Vanbrugh, whose ideas had received an ineffaceable impress from the façade of Versailles and from the French fortresses in which he had sojourned, had a passion for producing a stupendous effect by means of size and solidity which amounted almost to megalomania. At Blenheim he had a grand scope, hampered though he was by the hostility of the Duchess of Marlborough; but it can hardly be said that he rose fully to his opportunities, though there is undoubtedly a certain scenic splendour about the general conception. Voltaire remarked upon Blenheim that if the rooms were as wide as the walls were thick, the château would be convenient enough. But the last thing that Vanbrugh thought of was the personal comfort of his clients; provided he made his effect he was satisfied. His other works included Vanbrugh Castle (quite recently demolished) at Blackheath, the "Goose Pie" (so mercilessly mocked at by Swift) in Whitehall, and Grimthorpe in Lincolnshire, containing "the biggest entrance-hall" in the kingdom. Of all these it might be said, as the Earl of Peterborough remarked of the strange temples and mausolea which the architect designed for the famous gardens at Stowe, "immensity and Vanbrugh appear in the whole and in every part." His Brobdingnagian style in architecture elicited from Abel Evans the well-known epitaph—

"Lie heavy on him earth, for he
Laid many a heavy load on thee."

Vanbrugh died at his house at Whitehall on March 26th, 1726. He seemed to have been much beloved in his family circle, and was very popular in society and among the Kit-Kats (of the Whig club so named) as a man of wit and honour. Walpole somewhat inconclusively attributes his ease in writing to the fact that he lived in the best society, and wrote as they talked.

hand; on the left stands Farquhar, whose bright light genius is to Congreve's as female is to male, as moonlight unto sunlight.² These three comic dramatists (with Wycherley) form by themselves a distinct facet of English literature, and not one of the least brilliant. There is a snap about them and a levity, an artistic detachment and consequent technique which we shall hardly find elsewhere. Through such plays as *Much Ado*, *The Merry Wives*, *Monsieur Thomas*, *The Little French Lawyer*, we might have arrived by a purely native process at some

such development; but as a matter of fact, the Puritan closure intervened in 1642, and the product came to us predominantly through French and more remotely Spanish influence.

We must not judge these comedies of a corrupt court (Dryden attributed the main fault to the courtiers of Charles II.) too harshly, remembering that when they lost the stage, unlike the Elizabethan drama, they lost all. The town comedies of Shadwell and Wycherley are annihilated utterly, and all that remains is a pillar of salt.¹

¹ For the history of the Restoration drama see Ward, Beljame, and John Genest's *Some Account of the English Stage* (10 vols., 1832). Wycherley, Congreve, Shadwell, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh are included in the useful Mermaid Series*: the best plays of each author being selected and printed without alteration and without comment, save in the respective introductions. The four chief comic dramatists were edited by Leigh Hunt, and his edition in 1840 provoked Macaulay's famous *Essay* in *The Edinburgh Review*. Compare with this the essays by Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Mr. William Archer in his introduction to Farquhar. There are good sketches of Congreve by Edmund Gosse, Dr. Schmid (1897), A. Bennewitz (*Congreve und Molière*), G. S. Street, and A. C. Ewald. Of Vanbrugh there is an excellent edition* by W. C. Ward (2 vols., 1893). See also the article by Thomas Seccombe in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (lviii. 86-94). For our knowledge of the stage before Colley Cibber we are largely indebted to Mr. Pepys, and to the brief Historical Review of the Stage entitled *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708), by John Downes, book-keeper and prompter to the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The best part of what can thus be painfully gleaned is well summarised in R. W. Lowe's *Thomas Betterton** (1891).

A thunderbolt descended from a clear sky upon the corrupt stage of Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh when in March, 1698, Jeremy Collier hastily put together and brought out in an octavo of some 300 pages his famous *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*. Born in 1650, Collier was educated at Cambridge (Caius), became Lecturer at Gray's Inn, but three years later refused to take the oaths to William, and joined the ranks of the nonjurors. A born controversialist, after dealing in a spirit of comparative moderation with the points indicated by his title, Collier warmed considerably to the work. He denounced the disrespect shown by the stage to sacred things and sacred persons (to wit, the clergy); he fulminated against the immorality of plays in which the purblind Fondlewife is always triumphantly fooled by some "gay Lothario" or other; and finally he reverts with tedious erudition to the old argument of authority. His pamphlet thus stands half-way between the *Histrio-Mastix* of William Prynne and the *Absolute Unlawfulness* invoked by William Law. The book sold like wildfire, and elicited, of course, a whole troupe of replies by actors and authors, by, among others, Gildon, Wycherley, Filmer, John Dennis, Tom Durfey, Tom Brown, Motteux, Vanbrugh, and Congreve. Dryden seemed to admit a certain amount of provocation while lamenting the vehemence of the onslaught. "Perhaps the parson stretch'd a point too far," he complains in the Epilogue to *The Pilgrim*. The consequence was that societies to curb the licence of the stage sprang up in all quarters; the stage was terrorised by informers on the watch for blasphemous expressions; with the result that the stage, among a fluctuating but far from negligible section of Englishmen, obtained a sulphurous reputation for licence and wickedness, a reputation almost peculiar to our country, and one from which it has never, perhaps, quite completely recovered.

CHAPTER IV

ESSAYS, LETTERS, AND MEMOIRS: CONTROVERSIAL AND MINOR PROSE

"Such is the romance of authorship, that what was intended to be the most private of documents has become one of the great books. . . . Great as is the fascination of this most personal document as a problem in literary psychology, not less great is its interest to us as an interpreter of an age which we people with lewd Rochesters or mere Vicars of Bray. In it we get the accent and flush of these strange days."—*Introduction to the "Globe Pepys"* (ed. G. GREGORY SMITH).

Mr. Pepys and his Diary—John Evelyn—Bishop Burnet—*The Lives of the Norths*—Lucy Hutchinson—George Savile, Marquis of Halifax—Sir William Temple—*The Battle of the Books*—Whitelocke, Luttrell, Ludlow, and Lilly—Three great antiquaries: Dugdale, Wood, and Aubrey.

SAMUEL PEPYS, of an old family of Cottenham, Cambridgeshire, was the son of John Pepys,¹ a not too prosperous tailor in London, and was born probably at Brampton, Hunts, whither his father afterwards retired to a small estate, on February 23rd, 1633. He left St. Paul's School in 1650 (he was then "a great Roundhead"), and settled at Magdalene College, Cambridge, to which foundation upon his death he bequeathed his valuable library.² We know little of his college career, save for the fact that he was once admonished for being scandalously overserved with liquor. On December 1st, 1655, when he was still without settled means of support, he married Elizabeth St. Michel, a beautiful and portionless girl of fifteen, daughter of Alexandre St. Michel, a scatter-brained Huguenot who came to England in the retinue of Henrietta Maria, and was dismissed by that Queen for striking a friar. In 1656 Pepys entered the family, and became factotum, of his second cousin, Sir Edward Montagu, afterwards Earl of Sandwich. This led to a secretaryship and a place at the Navy Board. He studied the multiplication table, mastered not only accounts, but all the details of the navy, and soon became the "life of the office." In January, 1660, he commenced his famous *Diary*, which reveals him to us as gradually increasing in prosperity. In March, 1668, he made a great speech before the House

of Commons in defence of the naval administration, and soon after this became the most important of the naval officials. In 1668 he set up his coach. In May, 1669, he had to give up his diary, as he found the writing so harmful to his eyesight. Mrs. Pepys died a few months later. Subsequently he became secretary to the Admiralty, and obtained a seat in Parliament. During the Jesuit scare of 1679 he was accused of complicity in the "Popish Plot," but was able, though not without great expense, to clear himself satisfactorily. In 1683 he accompanied Lord Dartmouth to Tangier, and wrote a *Journal* of the proceedings. Next year he was chosen President of the Royal Society, and frequently entertained that body at his house in York Buildings. Upon the Revolution he was cashiered, and then after a short detention withdrew to a dignified and learned retirement at Clapham. He lived on until Anne's reign, and died at Clapham in the odour of sanctity, having received the sacraments from the nonjuror, George Hickes, on May 26th, 1703. His contemporary, John Evelyn, speaks in the highest terms of his industry, knowledge of the navy, generosity, and learning. He was buried on June 5th in a vault in St. Olave's, Hart Street. His neatly written manuscript *Diary* was deposited with his other books, in six bound volumes, at Magdalene College,

¹ The pronunciation of the surname has been much in dispute; but the evidence is in favour of *peeps*, rather than *peps*, *pep-pis*, *papes*, *pips*, or other euphonic fancies.

² See *Gentleman's Magazine*, February and March, 1906.

Cambridge. It was written in Shelton's system of tachygraphy or shorthand, which Pepys probably learned as a boy at college. It was first deciphered between 1819 and 1822 by John Smith, afterwards rector of Baldock, then an undergraduate of St. John's. In 1825 about half the whole of the transcript was edited by Lord Braybrooke. It was transcribed again by Mynors Bright, 1875-9, when four-fifths of the whole was published. The whole, save for a few flagrant indecencies, has been edited by Mr. H. B. Wheatley, 1893-9.

It is a curious fact that within a few years of the Restoration so many books that can only be described as quite unique in character, such as *Hudibras*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes*, and *Pepys, His Diary*, should have been produced. Not any of them perhaps are now very much read; we are strongly disposed to take them upon trust. There are strong elements of tediousness in nearly all of them, yet all of them have become absolutely part of our literary consciousness.

Pepys is really as unique as St. Simon in his own way, a more human and more primitive way; and he is almost, if not quite, as valuable to the historian, to the naval and theatrical historian especially, and also as affording an unrivalled social picture of his times. Still more unique is the *Diary* as revealing the whole area of a temperament not in itself, we imagine, by any means exceptional, always acquiring, always busy, always curious, always amused, always making the best of himself, and parading himself and his good repute as it were in a fine new coat. His cheerfulness and interest in life were so animated, his vitality is so great, that "to read Mr. Pepys is to enjoy our own brief innings better." But we marvel especially when we recognise that we owe a picture as detailed and as unembarrassed as Boswell's picture of Johnson to no other man than to Mr. Pepys himself. He was his own Boswell, and when we reflect on this we may well come to regard Mr. Pepys as a kind of man monster, for no man has done the like before or since. St. Augustine, it is true, attempted something of the kind, but his confessions are sadly handicapped by his saintship, as are Rousseau's by his distorting theories and by the psychological pose he finds it requisite to assume. But Pepys tells us everything quite cheerfully and simply, without the gloss either of poetry, romance, or philosophy.

He tells us all his little meannesses and brutalities quite frankly. He tells us, for instance, how he kicked his cook-maid, and how he was annoyed, not with himself, but with a nobleman's footboy, who was an unobserved spectator of the incident. He had a pretty wife at home, poor wretch! yet nothing would content him but to roam abroad and flit inconstantly from flower to flower. He was vain, greedy, wanton, pious, repentant, profligate, all on paper. He lived in an age when old Rowley led the revels, and he humbly followed in his wake, and although his *Diary* has its tedious spaces, it is in the end mighty good sport indeed.

Had Pepys any idea at the back of his mind that he was addressing a vast audience in the remote future—that his unique confidences to himself would be unravelled some day, and that the very Pepys would stand revealed to the world as no other man before or since? This is a question which every reader of Pepys will put to himself, and it is one which we have reflected upon not seldom. The best answer that we have been able to find to it hitherto is a passage by R. L. Stevenson in his volume on *Men and Books*. "Pepys was not such an ass," says Stevenson, "but that he must have perceived as he proceeded with his *Diary* that his book was not like other books. He was a great reader, and he knew what other books were like. It must at least have crossed his mind that some one might ultimately decipher the manuscript, and he himself, with all his pains and pleasures, be resuscitated in some later day, and the thought, although discouraged, must have warmed his heart. He was not such an ass besides but he must have been conscious of the deadly explosives, the guncotton and the giant-powder, he was hoarding in his drawer. Let some contemporary light upon the journal, and Pepys was plunged for ever in social and political disgrace. We can trace the growth of his terrors by two facts. In 1660, while the *Diary* was still in its youth, he tells about it, as a matter of course, to a lieutenant in the navy; but in 1669, when it was already near an end, he could have bitten his tongue out, as the saying is, because he had let slip his secret to one so grave and friendly as Sir William Coventry. And from two other facts I think we may infer that he had entertained, even if he had not acquiesced in, the thought of a far distant

publicity. The first is of capital importance—the *Diary* was not destroyed. The second—that he took unusual precautions to confound the cipher in roguish passages—proves beyond question that he was thinking of some other reader besides himself. Perhaps while his friends were admiring the greatness of his behaviour at the approach of death he may have had a twinkling hope of immortality.”

A very different estimate of the probabilities of the case is upheld by a less impressionistic critic, Sir Leslie Stephen. “The piquancy of the *Diary*,” he says, “is not due to its expression of uncommon emotions, but precisely to the frankness which reveals emotions, all but universal, which most people conceal from themselves, and nearly all men from others. Boswell not only felt, but avowed similar weaknesses. Pepys avowed them, though only to himself. He was not a hypocrite in cipher, though no doubt as reserved as his neighbours in long-hand. The ‘unconscious humour’ which Lowell attributes to him lies in the coolness of his confession, with which his readers sympathise, though they would not make similar confessions themselves. It seems to be highly improbable that he ever thought of publicity for his diaries, though he may have kept them as materials for an autobiography which was never published.”

What is perfectly clear is that Pepys is no longer what the formal age imagined him to be, a garrulous braggart who amused after ages by accident. His ferocious enjoyment of life and his absorbing greed of sensation were linked not only with an amazing *savoir vivre*, but also with a peculiar gift of frank and forthright utterance on paper.

A singular contrast to the naughtiness of this world-famous *étude intime* is supplied by the studious and respectable *Diary* (first published 1818) of John Evelyn, the loyalist virtuoso and country gentleman whose long life from 1620 to 1706 is almost synchronous with that of his worthy friend and fellow diarist. For the two were great friends, though Pepys cherished an inward laugh at Evelyn’s vanity, and Evelyn was sandblind as regards the real and inner Pepys.

Evelyn, as has been justly said, never drops the somewhat artificial manner of the cultivated, dignified gentleman with a mind open to appreciate all the best which his age had to give him on the side of science, miscellaneous

information, artistic taste, but never harassing his reader with any imaginative or speculative effort of his own. He represents the last word of a scholarly but somewhat frigid self-culture. He was essentially a student who assimilates with no little versatility the many-sided culture which foreign travel and a gradual absorption of Renaissance ideas had rendered possible in England. He has, too, much of the curiosity which is so conspicuous in Pepys, but without Pepys’s absorbing zest in the life that he saw about him. As an elegant virtuoso he is almost the equal of Horace Walpole in a later age, but without the propensity to witty and malicious gossip which renders Horace Walpole so inimitable a chronicler of the mental activity of a period. This absence of the vividly personal element detracts from the interest of Evelyn’s *Diary*, yet it has an interest and value of its own. It rarely gives the writer’s own thoughts or predilections, but it is careful, minute, scholarly, and methodical in its descriptions of events and of persons, of places and buildings and works of art. Where he does exhibit some warmth of personal sentiment is in his loyalty to the English Church, a loyalty which is characteristic of what was best and noblest and most consistent in the Royalist party. It is this devotion which animates and redeems the coldness of critical reserve and self-repression by which so many pages of the *Diary* are coagulated and benumbed. What it loses in human interest, however, Evelyn’s *Diary* gains in value to the historian of civilisation as a compendium of the culture, the technical knowledge, and artistic taste of the highest type of educated English gentleman during the second half of the seventeenth century.

It was not till 1724 that Thomas Burnet, the Bishop’s third son, published the *History of his Own Time*, written by his worthy father Gilbert, Bishop of Salisbury (d. 1715, *æt.* 72). This work is divided into two parts. The first includes the period from the accession of Charles I. to the Revolution of 1688, and of this the part previous to the Restoration is a mere sketch. The second part contains an account of the reigns of William III. and of Anne as far as the year 1713. Burnet’s first idea was a gossiping history of the half-century 1660-1710; but the appearance of Clarendon’s *History* exercised a somewhat sinister influence upon the design. He had the ambition of converting his book from a brick chronicle into



From the Painting by W. P. Frith.

The Vicar of Wakefield

a marble History of Clarendonian proportions. The result was perceptibly to blunt the humorous edge of his original reporting. In his own way Burnet is often delightful; partial and journalistic, no doubt; but giving us a wonderfully lively, and on the whole not seriously inaccurate, survey of that revolutionary period. A busybody, rather obtuse than otherwise, and full of self-importance, "B." is yet patriotic above the standard of his age. He writes consistently as a Whig, but without the absurd credulity or the selfish and malignant passion which was so common among his party. Worse than any partisanship, says the pedant, is the extreme carelessness alike of manner, style, and substance which so often disfigures his pages. His prose indeed is at times so tedious and confused and so muddled by parentheses and interlocked relative clauses that it is almost impossible to interpret the precise drift of what he is saying; but through almost all the aberration of Burnet's judgment and style we shall recognise qualities as rare as they are welcome in an historian. The framework of his history is constructed upon first-hand evidence and upon personal knowledge. His historical portraits are those of men with whom he had come in close personal contact. He actually lived with the men of whom he writes. He observed their errors, their faults, and their vices; but he is a humorist and a man of the world, a competent, energetic man, with a largish horizon, and for all alike, however they may have treated him, Burnet retains a shrewd toleration, a most human and reconciling indulgence.

Burnet's *History of his Own Time* deserves a place by itself for its frank partisanship and cheerful anecdote. The same qualities are present in a more legitimate sphere in the delightful *Lives* of the Norths. Roger North (d. 1734, *æt.* 81), son of Dudley, fourth Baron North, and brother of Francis North, first Baron Guilford, who was appointed Lord Chancellor in 1682, was not only a stout cavalier by race, but was also closely bound by official position to the government of James II. At the Revolution he refused to take the oaths, and retired to his country estate at Rougham, in Norfolk, where he spent a vigorous old age

in gardening, building, music, vindicating the memory of his brothers Francis and Sir Dudley, and writing his own autobiography. The *Lives*, first published in 1744, show the distance traversed in the biographic art since Manningham collected legal gossip in the Temple. They are written in a familiar and at times rather slovenly style, but are full of shrewdness and good stories, keen observation, and that instinct for detail so peculiar to the age of Aubrey and Pepys. North also wrote a fierce *Examen* traversing the *Compleat History* of the Whig chronicler Bishop White Kennett. His Tory predilections were certainly quite as strong as the Whig prepossessions of his opponent, and his attack on the History quite as partial and intemperate in spirit as that of the less systematic strictures of Swift upon Bishop Burnet.

Another biography of the time, unknown to the age which produced it, is the *Life* of Colonel Hutchinson, the regicide, by his wife Lucy. Born in 1620, she was the third daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, governor of the Tower. From the date of her marriage in 1638 she was wholly devoted to the husband whose strict religious and political views she henceforth shared. At the Restoration she managed to save her husband, whose republican views had prevented his retaining office under Cromwell, but he was soon thrown into prison as a suspicious character, and died in confinement at Deal Castle. His widow devoted herself henceforth to the vindication of his character in a panegyric *Life* (first printed 1806) which still pleases through the simplicity of its style and the single-minded affection which is the dominant *motif* of it.

Of the remaining historical writers of the age, or more precisely, we should say, the historical essayists, the most prominent is George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, whose reputation is nicely balanced by that of Sir William Temple. The mind of Halifax was one of the loftiest and most statesmanlike in that age of grovelling factions, above which it sought continually to maintain itself fairly poised. He opposed alike the more despotic acts of Charles and the fury of the so-called Protestant opposition.¹ In his views on govern-

¹ He contributed more perhaps than any single man to prevent James II.'s exclusion from the throne, yet when James was King he kept entirely aloof from court and visited the seven bishops (at most of whom he laughed in his sleeve) in the Tower. After William had landed he took the lead in making him welcome and in scaring James away from Whitehall. After Somers, perhaps no one took a greater part in the definition of

ment he seems indeed to have had much in common with Bolingbroke in the next generation, while in regard to toleration and colonial policy he in more than one respect anticipated the broader and more luminous ideas of Burke. The miscellanies of the Marquis of Halifax, including his *Advice to a Daughter*, *The Character of a Trimmer*, *The Anatomy of an Equivalent*, *A Letter to a Dissenter*, *Cautions for Choice of Parliament Men*, *A Rough Draft of a New Model at Sea*, and *Maxims of State*, were published in one volume in 1700, and again in 1704 and in 1717. The famous *Character of a Trimmer* (a warm vindication of Halifax's political temperament) was written in January, 1685, in answer to an attack upon trimmers in general by Roger l'Estrange in his *Observer*. Ranke justly calls Halifax one of the finest pamphleteers that ever lived, and most of the pamphlets above named are as pregnant with wisdom as with the pointed, ironical wit in which Halifax was one of the first of our writers to excel. Like Chesterfield or Lord Byron, Halifax prided himself on being an aristocrat. Hewrote about what was going on around him as part of a great comedy. Where other writers relapse into tedious explanation or commentary he is quite content to shrug his shoulder or to raise an eyebrow, and he expresses himself throughout with the perfect ease of a fine gentleman and the nonchalance of a contemporary and associate of that prince of saunterers, King Charles II. These qualities perhaps are seen nowhere better than in his admirable *Character of Charles II.* This was not included in his miscellanies, nor was it printed until 1750, when it was issued with some fresh maxims with the consent, and probably by the desire, of his granddaughter, Lady Burlington. Like most of Halifax's pieces, however, it is probable that it had passed from hand to hand in manuscript long before it was printed.

The character of a trimmer was exemplified almost as well by Sir William Temple as by Halifax himself. But Temple looked down upon conflicting parties not so much from the standpoint of the philosophic statesman as from that of a cautious diplomatist. He was appointed English envoy at Brussels in 1665, and in 1668 was mainly instrumental in bringing

about the Triple Alliance between England, Holland, and Sweden; in the same year he was appointed English ambassador at The Hague. After his return thence in 1670 he penned his interesting *Observations on the United Provinces of the Netherlands*, which remained for many years one of the most popular of political handbooks. The same might be said of his *Essay upon the Original and Nature of Government*, which is notable not only for some fine images and sensible definitions, but also as anticipating the view expressed with less caution nine years later by Sir Robert Filmer in his *Patriarcha* (1680), that the State is the outcome of a patriarchal system, rather than of a social compact as conceived by Hooker or Hobbes. After a period of prominence as a politician of first rank, Temple was offered an embassy at Madrid, but preferred to return to the nectarines, cherries, "sheen plums," and apricots of his new seat of Moor Park, near Farnham, where he was set on a pedestal and worshipped as an oracle by his womenkind. Thither in 1689 came Jonathan Swift (*æt.* 22) in capacity of amanuensis at a salary of £20 a year, and here he first met Esther Johnson (Stella), whose mother was in attendance upon Temple's sister, Lady Giffard. Hither, too, came William III. to discuss the Triennial Bill and other important matters of state. On one of these visits William is said to have taught Temple's amanuensis the Dutch method of cutting asparagus; while Temple himself is less credibly reported to have assisted his young familiar in revising a first draft of *A Tale of a Tub*.

During the whole period of his retirement in 1681 Temple had been employed in elaborating the essays upon which his literary fame mainly rests. Six of these had appeared in 1680 under the title of *Miscellanea*. The second and more noteworthy volume, including the papers *Of Gardening*, *Of Heroic Virtue*, *Of Poetry*, and the notorious essay on *Ancient and Modern Learning*, was issued in 1692. The vein of classical eulogy and reminiscence which Temple affects in the essay last mentioned was adopted merely as an elegant proluision upon the passing controversy among the wits of France as to the relative merits of ancient and modern writers. First broached as a

the Revolution Settlement. But the fact did not prevent a strong revulsion of sentiment when he discovered that William was going to abandon himself to party government and not put himself above it, and he seems to have gone as far as to exchange a letter or two with the exiled monarch.

paradox, the superiority of modern poets over the Greeks and Romans had been seriously maintained by Charles Perrault in a poem upon the *Siècle de Louis le Grand* which he read before the Academy in January, 1687. Fontenelle, in a lighter and far more suggestive vein, ranged himself with Perrault in his lucid *Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes*. La Fontaine and La Bruyère took the opposite view. Boileau was extremely angry at the presumption of Perrault, but it was not until 1694 that he delivered himself magisterially on the subject in his *Reflections on Longinus*. Temple now adopted the tone without possessing a tithe of the knowledge of a Boileau, but his essay is light, suggestive, and fanciful, rather than gravely critical, and too much serious criticism has already been wasted upon it.

William Wotton was the first to enter the lists against Temple with his *Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning*, published in 1694. Charles Boyle (afterwards Earl of Orrery), by way of championing the polite essayist, set to work to edit *The Epistles of Phalaris*, which Temple (whose opinion on such a matter was absolutely worthless) professed to regard as genuine. It was when this conjecture had been ruthlessly demolished by the learned sarcasm of Bentley that Swift came to the aid of his patron with the most enduring relic of the controversy, *The Battle of the Books*. Temple had begun to reply to Bentley, but he was now happily spared the risk of publication.

As a writer, apart from a weakness for Gallicisms, which he admitted and tried to correct, Temple, in his *Essays*, heralds a development in the direction of refinement, rhythmical finish, and emancipation from the pedantry of long parentheses and superfluous quotations. He was also a pioneer in the judicious use of the paragraph. Hallam, ignoring Halifax, would assign him the second place, after Dryden, among the polite authors of his epoch. Swift gave expression to the belief that he had advanced our English tongue to as great a perfection as it could well bear; Chesterfield recommended him to his son; Dr. Johnson spoke of him as the first writer to give cadence to the English language; and Lamb praises him delightfully in his *Essay on the Genteel Style*. During the eighteenth century his essays were used as exercises and models. But the progress made during the last half-

century in the direction of the sovereign prose quality of limpidity has not been favourable to Temple's literary reputation, and in the future it is probable that his *Letters* and *Memoirs* will be valued chiefly by the historian, while his *Essays* will remain interesting primarily for the picture they afford of the cultured gentleman of the period. A few noble similes, however, and those majestic words of consolation addressed to Lady Essex, deserve and will find a place among the consecrated passages of English prose.

Among the lesser historians and memoir-writers, Bulstrode Whitelocke (1605—1675) stands pre-eminent. He was a Commissioner of the Great Seal under the Commonwealth, and did good service to the state as ambassador to Sweden. In his retirement under the Restoration régime he wrote *Memorials of English Affairs from 1625 to 1660*, first published in 1682, and a journal of his Swedish embassy, which did not see the light until 1672. Whitelocke hardly aspires to be more than a chronicler or historical journal writer, but his work is of the utmost importance to the historian for the material which it embodies, including many state papers of importance.

A humbler compilation, made up of diurnal occurrences and cuttings from newspapers, is the *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* of the collector, town gossip, and antiquary, Narcissus Luttrell (1657—1732). His diary, which extends from 1678 to 1714, was first brought into notice by the dexterous use made of it by Macaulay in his *History*, which led to the Clarendon Press printing it in six volumes, with a rough index, in 1857. Luttrell's extensive collection of ballads is now in the British Museum Library.

Among memoir-writers proper, a not unimportant place is held by Edmund Ludlow (1617—1692). To destroy the King and found a republic was the fixed idea of Ludlow's life, as to so many ideologists when in unsettled times the very name of republic becomes a sort of fetish. Such were the views expressed in the composition of his Swiss exile, his notable *Memoirs*, first printed in 1698-9. Narrow in outlook, plain and homely in expression, Ludlow's *Memoirs*, like those of most of the Puritan and Parliamentary apologists, form anything but enlivening reading. Within the range of the writer's own observation and experience, however, they are thoroughly honest, and their

integrity is that of the earnest man with few ideas. Like another Defoe, Ludlow kept his eyes very near down to the texture of political life.¹

William Lilly (1602—1681), who also wrote *A True History of James I. and Charles I.* showing some power of character-drawing, is more noted for his once highly esteemed astrological writings, and for memoirs which are still highly entertaining to curiosity-hunters for the glimpses they afford of contemporary humours, bygone manners, and singular characters with whom this Restoration Mr. Sludge was brought professionally into connection. The memoirs of that distinguished virtuoso, Elias Ashmole (1617—1692), are likewise diverting by reason of their quaint egotism and minute portrayal of his strenuous conflict with the various ailments, both major and minor, to which human flesh is heir. Besides medicine this worthy antiquary studied profoundly in astrology, physics, mathematics, and heraldry. He eventually became Windsor Herald, saved a nice sum of money, and by the acquisition of the Tradescant antiquities laid the foundation of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. His marriage connected him with the great antiquary of the previous generation, and one of the greatest savants in his own department that England has ever produced. This was the great Sir William Dugdale (1605—1686), a native of Warwickshire, who was educated at Coventry, and showed when little more than a boy a strong predilection for antiquarian research.² Sir Christopher Hatton procured him access to the Cottonian Library and the Tower records, and he was soon established as a pursuivant (Rouge Croix, 1639), and as the prospective historian of Warwickshire. His *Antiquities* of that county was eventually issued in 1656, and was hailed at once as a masterpiece of archæological and topographical research, and as a model county history for all time. In the meantime, with much help from the original projecter, Roger Dodsworth (d. 1654), Dugdale had issued the first volume of his monumental *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655), containing a vast mass of

information concerning the history, biography, architecture, inscriptions, and documents of the great monastic institutions of England prior to the Reformation—a book in great demand on the continent among the libraries of foreign monasteries, though it was looked upon sourly both by the Puritans and also by the descendants of those hungry courtiers who had either begged or purchased vast tracts of Church property at nominal prices during the reign of Henry VIII. A second volume appeared in 1661, and a third in 1673. The best edition is the greatly augmented one issued by Bandinel, Caley, and Ellis in 54 parts with 246 illustrations (the latter alone costing 6,000 guineas) in 1813. Dugdale was scarcely less fortunate in the choice of subjects of permanent interest and importance in his *History of St. Paul's Cathedral in London*, 1658, a detailed account of the church before its destruction by the Great Fire, and his *Baronage of England*, 3 vols., 1676, the first really adequate genealogical and biographical survey of the English nobility. In this noble series of antiquarian compilations Dugdale was materially assisted by several of the leading antiquaries of his day, including Dodsworth, Spelman, Rushworth, Somner, Aubrey, Ashmole, and Anthony à Wood. Dugdale's treatment of antiquities afforded to Wood, as he naïvely confessed, a glimpse into Elysium, and the Oxford antiquary gives us a quaint picture of their joint researches in the Cottonian Library at Westminster (in which he laments that they were only allowed to peruse two MSS. at a time), and amidst the vast store of charters and rolls in the White Tower. Dugdale was Norroy Herald from the Restoration onwards, nor did he allow his absorption in black-letter documents to interfere with the due exaction of his legitimate fees. He was, in fact, the terror of heraldic amateurs, interlopers, and evildoers. He built up a considerable estate, and Wood, whose foible was not Christian charity, suggests that his end was hastened by his over-anxiety about worldly concerns. He died on February 10th, 1686, leaving a somewhat colourless *Diary*, which was edited

¹ In speaking of his antipathies he often attains a sardonic power which takes the reader by surprise. His particular account of the republican factions which first opposed Cromwell, and after his death fell foul of one another, is valuable and suggestive. Scott derived some hints from him for his effective sketch of the fifth-monarchy fanatic in *Peveril of the Peak*.

² He was born, says Aubrey, at 3.15 p.m. on September 12th, 1605, at which precise hour a swarm of bees pitched under his mother's chamber window as an omen of his laborious collections.

with his letters and other materials by William Henry Hamper in 1827.

To Dugdale's example and influence was due in no small measure the vast antiquarian output of Anthony à Wood. Born in Oxford of an old county family, Wood was educated at New College and Thame Schools, whence he passed to Merton College (in the street where his father's house was situated), first as post-master and then as Bible-clerk. He would doubtless have succeeded to a fellowship there, as his brother had done, but for his notoriously peevish temper. In politics he was a strong cavalier, but his tastes were musical and historical rather than political, and he would have probably relapsed into a very desultory, futile, and despondent mode of life but for the keen spirit of emulation roused in him by the appearance of Dugdale's *Warwickshire*. He determined to do a book of the same kind for his native Oxfordshire, and commenced operations by perambulating the county, collecting inscriptions and noting antiquities. Eventually, however, he restricted his design to a treatise on the annals of Oxford City and University, with an account of the antiquities of the churches, colleges, and public buildings thereof. The university portion was brought out in Latin in two folio volumes in 1674 as *Historia et Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis*, the text of Wood's original English version appearing for the first time under the careful editorship of John Gutch in 1791-6. The city treatise was not adequately edited until a hundred years later, when it was brought out under the auspices of the Oxford Historical Society. Wood had been greatly assisted in the biographical part of his work by John Aubrey, and with Aubrey's assistance and that of others, especially Andrew Allam, vice-principal of St. Edmund Hall, he now contemplated an elaborate biographical dictionary with a bibliography of all Oxford writers and bishops. In his history of Oxford he had been supplied with most of his material ready-made at the hands of the indefatigable Oxford antiquary of James I.'s time, Brian Twyne. The new work (*Athenæ Oxon.*) was based upon materials which had to be collected for the first time, involving an enormous amount of industry whether of research, correspondence, or bibliographical compilation. Biassed as Wood's opinions are, and censorious as are his judgments, and invaluable as was the informal assistance which

he received from such men as Aubrey, it remains perfectly marvellous that at a time when libraries and other instruments of research were in such a rudimentary state one single man should have been able to bring together such a vast *corpus* of fresh biographical material. His book, indeed, has not merely been the inspiration and exemplar of all similar works, but it has proved the core of all biographical compilation on a large scale in England from that day to this. It was issued at a considerable pecuniary sacrifice in two large folio volumes in 1691 and 1692, bringing the history of Oxford writers from 1500 to 1690. A very valuable edition with additional material was brought out by Dr. Philip Bliss in 1813-20, but a new edition corrected by Wood's own supplementary papers remains a desideratum.

Wood wrote of his biographical henchman John Aubrey with contemptuous ingratitude as "a man of a sparkish garb, a shiftless person, roving and maggoty-headed, and sometimes little better than crazed, who stuffed his letters with foolishness, and was often guilty of grievous misinformation." Such a description does a gross injustice to Aubrey, though it helps us to form some idea of the singularity of the man whose position among biographical antiquaries is a unique one. His curiosity had a twist in it which separated it from that of the orthodox antiquary, and this sprang from his conception that it was incumbent on him to transmit to posterity just those distinctive traits and peculiarities of the subjects which ordinary observers deem it convenient to overlook.

John Aubrey (1626—1697) was born at Easton Percy in the parish of Kington in Wiltshire on March 12th, 1626. He was sent to school with Hobbes at the house of a vicar near Malmesbury, and went on to Trinity College, Oxford; but the war interrupted his studies and he was sent home, much to his grief, to associate with grooms and serving-men at his father's house. With difficulty he persuaded his father to enter him at the Middle Temple. In 1652 he inherited his father's lands with many debts and encumbrances, to which he steadily added until his estate was all gone. "I was never quiet till all was gone." In 1667 he began working for Wood. In 1685 he roughly stitched together his *Natural Remarques on the County of Wilts*, a quaint and breezy concatenation of chapters upon a

diversity of topics: air, springs, rivers, soils, plants, diseases and cures, worthies, gardens, arts, the downs, wool, clothing trade, fairs, hawking, fatalities, accidents, and seats. These were edited by John Britton in 1847. The only work which was published in his lifetime was the *Miscellanies* of 1696, an entertaining collection of ghost-stories with other weird and impossible anecdotes of the supernatural. In June of the following year, during one of his interminable perambulations, he died, and was buried in the Church of St. Mary Magdalene at Oxford. His *Brief Lives* and other antiquarian collectanea were all eventually to find their way in manuscript into the Oxford libraries.

Aubrey began his extraordinary series of *Brief Lives*, some 400 in number, on the suggestion of, and with the desire to help, Anthony à Wood, to whom he became known in 1667, with his *History* and *Athenæ*. The idea was that after Wood had used what he required—and he often seems to have embodied whole passages from Aubrey's manuscript *Lives* in his *Athenæ*—the text should be returned to Aubrey, revised and polished into a more consecutive form and brought out separately. He seems to have got back his manuscript in a sadly gelded condition, as he bitterly complains in 1692, and he was much concerned thenceforth in getting opinions upon it with a view to shaping it finally for the press. Next year, however, the manuscript of the *Lives* was placed in the Ashmolean Museum, and no adequate use of it was made until 1813, when the most interesting of the *Lives* were published; not, however, until 1898 were the *Brief Lives* published in their integrity from the originals, mainly in the Bodleian, by the Rev. Andrew Clark.

Aubrey, as we are enabled to picture him,

can be described only as a delightful if incongruous blend of Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Jedediah Cleishbotham, and a descriptive reporter on a modern New York journal. With Mr. Pepys and James Boswell he is one of the three consummate Paul Pry's of English letters. The biographical instinct was developed in him to an extent that is perhaps unrivalled for purity and intensity. His literary style, we must admit, was altogether unequal to his conceptions. That insatiable curiosity of his, which time had not yet vulgarised nor custom staled, had no wings wherewith to fly. It kept to the earth. Aubrey does not try to fathom or to explain greatness. He takes his heroes at the world's valuation. But he sees that, although heroes, they are still men with like absurdities to ourselves; and he points out what are to him, Aubrey, an unprejudiced and incorruptible observer, the distinctive and peculiar traits or oddities of each one of them. Hobbes was a profound philosopher, no doubt, and Aubrey shared many of his opinions, but what Aubrey was anxious to inform the world about him is that he trod both his shoes aside the same way, that he was much afflicted when bald by flies, that his favourite diet was whittings, that he wore Spanish leather boots laced up the sides with black ribbons, and that in the middle of the night, when he believed that everybody else was fast asleep, he would sing prick-song with a loud voice in order to exercise his lungs. Similarly with Milton, Spenser, Fuller, Suckling, Waller, Bacon, and Shakespeare himself, he gives us many incomparable details. Aubrey well understood two most important axioms of the biographic art: first, the need of avoiding history and generalities; secondly, that the best of men are but men at the best.¹

A LARGE number of minor memoir-writers, who already begin to swarm, and of autobiographers, might without difficulty be enumerated; the number of such works is constantly increasing as the dust of old libraries and other depositories of manuscripts is disturbed by emissaries of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, and their finds printed, often *in extenso*, through the diligence of the Camden or of the Chetham or other learned publishing societies. It will be sufficient here briefly to mention the names of Reresby, Bramston, Prideaux.

Sir John Reresby (1634—1689), a baronet and local magnate of weight in the West Riding, wrote an entertaining account of his doings and goings as a member of Parliament in the employment of the court between 1658 and 1688. He was a regular time-server, obsequious, yet ever ready to speak boldly for any *douceur* that he conceived to be within his reach; but though his personality is uninteresting, his close practical view of men and things is entertaining because it is so real. Reresby's special patron was the Marquis of Halifax.

¹ For a most diverting study of Aubrey and his art, see Marcel Schwob, *Spicilege*, 1896, 253-67.

Among "sidelights" we have a glimpse of Charles II. priming the Prince of Orange with wine, and of the Prince getting very drunk and breaking the windows of the maids-of-honour.

Sir John Bramston (1611—1700) wrote another Royalist autobiography, which is very full through the closing period of Charles II.'s reign and contains much of purely personal interest at the time, which now by its very minuteness throws light upon the social and family history of England in Stuart times.

Of Oxford at this same period we get a pleasantly scandalous chronicle at the hands of Humphrey Prideaux (1648—1724), a good classical scholar, and extremely typical, first of a college don, and then of a garrulous dean. He was Dean of Norwich from 1702 to 1724.

Among the best letters of the period, apart from those of Halifax, Danby, Temple, Sir Edward Nicholas, and other politicians, may perhaps be mentioned *The Verney Letters* (published by the Camden Society), the Savile correspondence, the correspondence of the Hatton family, and the perhaps somewhat overpraised epistles written by Dorothy Osborne to her future husband, Sir William Temple, between 1652 and 1654. That the personal charm of a very winning woman breathed through these letters is not, however, to be denied, and there is in addition the romance of a long and arduous courtship. T. P. Courtenay first brought these letters to light in his *Life of Temple*, and they led him to proclaim himself one of Dorothy's devoted servants; upon which act of homage, with a delightful use of the editorial plural, the incomparable T. B. Macaulay in *The Edinburgh* exclaims that "we must declare ourselves his rivals." More recently the fair Dorothy has found a devoted champion and most jealous editor in Judge Parry.

The amount of religious writing produced between 1660 and 1700 is very extensive; as, however, it is now practically unread, our survey of it must be rapid. The superior clergy of the first generation after the Restoration include the names of Gilbert Sheldon, John Pearson, John Cosin, George Morley, Brian Walton, Seth Ward, John Dolben, Herbert Thorndike, Barnabas Oley, Isaac Barrow, Robert South, Richard Busby, Edmund Pocock, Isaac Basire, and Richard Allestree, this last being the reputed author of the most famous devotional manual of the age between Jeremy Taylor and William Law (*Serious Call*), the homely and unemotional *Whole Duty of Man* (1658). Most of the divines above mentioned represent the tradition of the older Caroline Church. Their prose is somewhat stiff and stately, with old-fashioned embroidery. Pearson, for instance, whose "very dross is gold," is a representative High Churchman of the old school, and his one immortal contribution to Anglican theology is his *Exposition of the Creed* (1659). Pearson's penultimate predecessor as Master of Trinity was Isaac Barrow (d. 1677, *æt.* 47; buried Westminster Abbey), the Creighton of his time, a man of extraordinary intellectual eminence and versatility. In mathematics in that time Barrow had but one rival, John Wallis, and both Barrow and Wallis were educated at Felsted School, then at the height of its reputation under the single-minded and devoted Martin Holbeach. Among Barrow's pupils was Newton, and chief among his admirers as a preacher and controversialist will ever be remembered the great Earl of Chatham, who impressed upon his sons the importance of a style as dignified as that of Barrow. The son of a linendraper, and so unruly as a boy that his father was wont to exclaim that, if it pleased God to take any of his children, he could best spare Isaac, Barrow attained to the front rank by sheer strength of brain. He was, indeed, an intellectual athlete of the first order, and a cosmopolitan in respect to human knowledge, being equally eminent in science and linguistics, in theology and in mathematics. The first of Cambridge preachers, Barrow's rival in the Oxford pulpit was Robert South (1633—1716), pupil of two of England's most famous pedagogues, Dr. Busby and Dr. Fell (the unlucky transferee of Martial's *Epigram*,¹ i. 33), himself unrivalled for his wit in the pulpit and for his repetition of the formula "nolo episcopari." He showed his wit by preaching shorter sermons,—he was briefer by two hours than Taylor or Barrow, and correspondingly more epigrammatic. His sarcasm of Taylor's style was not wholly undeserved: "I speak the words of soberness. . . . I preach the Gospel not with enticing words of men's wisdom. Nothing here of the fringes of the North Star, nothing here of the down of angels' wings, or the beautiful locks of cherubims—no starched similitudes introduced with a 'Thus have I seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion.' The Apostles, poor souls! were content to take lower ground." Like most of his fellows, South was a staunch and rather bitter royalist, referring to Milton once as a "blind adder." Bishop Cosin of Durham was the Pusey, the mind-manager and diplomatist of the Restored Church. Its aggressive exclusiveness is well represented by Archbishop Sheldon. He it is who was mainly responsible for that exclusion of Puritans which must ever seem disgraceful to the intelligence no less than to the Christianity of the Protestant Church of England of 1662. Anglicanism, it might then have seemed, had learned nothing and forgotten nothing. A few concessions would have won over 1,600 out of the 2,000 ejected divines. As it was, many of the best men were excluded, among them Baxter, Poole, Manton, Bates, Calamy, Brooks, Watson, Charnock, Caryl, Howe, Flavel, Bridge, Owen, Goodwin; many others. By common consent the first place among them falls to Richard Baxter, born at Rowton, Salop, of a family of decayed freeholders, towards the close of 1615. A conformist originally both by birth and temper, he grew too puritan for the bishops and too episcopalian for the Presbyterians. His personal holiness and extraordinary gifts as a preacher, no less than his casuistic and literary attainments, designated him for the episcopal bench, but he could not accept it upon the proffered terms, and was driven out of the Church. He found a Zoar in the village of Acton, where he had as neighbours Lord Halifax and

¹ "Non amo te, Sabidi, nec possum dicere quare.
Hoc tantum possum dicere: non amo te."

"I do not like thee Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell;
But this I know, and know full well:
I do not like thee, Dr. Fell."

Sir Matthew Hale. His friends were numerous and influential; but in their despite he was shamelessly persecuted, driven from pillar to post, and subjected to the lash of Jeffreys' merciless tongue. "Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave. Thou hast written books enough to fill a cart, and every book as full of sedition as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipt out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. By the grace of God, I'll look after thee!"

Apart from his *Reliquiæ* (1696), which contains some of the most vivid pictures in the whole realm of autobiography, and "a whole cartload" of lesser books, Baxter wrote three great beseeching books, which are fit to rank as the masterpieces of one of the first pastoral geniuses that England has produced. These are *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* (1650), *The Reformed Pastor* (1656), and *The Call to the Unconverted* (1657). Left saddened and lonely by the death of his wife, celebrated in the *Breviate* of 1681, he sought refuge from sorrow and physical pain in writing and preaching, in harness to the end, and on his death-bed "almost well." About five on the evening of Monday, December 7th, 1691, Death sent his harbinger, says Sylvester, to summon him away. A great trembling and coldness awakened nature, and extorted strong cries which continued for some time. At length he ceased, waiting in patient expectation for his change. The gentle cry in the ear of his housekeeper, "Death, death," betokened full consciousness to the last, and turning to thank a friend for a visit, he exclaimed, "The Lord teach you to die." At four o'clock next morning his long suffering was over, and "he entered on the saints' everlasting rest." Many vied in doing honour to his memory. Conformists and Nonconformists both lamented him, and accompanied his hearse to the grave from Merchant Taylors' Hall to Christ Church. Among his many incongruous admirers was Joseph Glanvill (1636—1680), the vindicator of witchcraft (*Sadducismus Triumphatus*), and of the pre-existence of souls (*Lux Orientalis*), and the preserver of the fruitful legend of the "Scholar-Gypsy."

The second generation of Anglican divines after the Restoration was, perhaps, more eminent than the first. It included the names of William Sancroft, John Tillotson, Edward Stillingfleet, Thomas Ken, Gilbert Burnet, Humphrey Prideaux, Simon Patrick, William Beveridge, and Thomas Tenison. Brought up a Calvinist, Tillotson conformed at the Restoration, and rose by his preaching and his clear lucid English, in which he had scarcely a rival in that age, to be Dean of St. Paul's. From that position he was elevated, much against his will, to the uneasy succession of Sancroft, when that archbishop persistently refused to acknowledge the supremacy of William III. A man of a sweet, gentle, and sensitive nature, accustomed to the environment of breathless crowds, who hung upon his every word, he was unfitted for an elevation so high and so stormy as that which fell to his lot. Intellectually he was a latitudinarian, and his doctrine has been described as the shoe-horn which drew on the deism of the eighteenth century. A much stronger prelate was Pepys's "famous young Stillingfleet," whom Burnet described as "the learnedest man of his day"; educated among the liberal Cambridge schoolmen, represented by Ralph Cudworth and Benjamin Whichcote, Stillingfleet was in 1659 a strong advocate of accommodation (*Irenicum*); later on he produced his erudite *Origines Sacre* (1662), but notwithstanding his cool head, his tolerance, and his learning, he was badly worsted in his encounter with the philosophic Locke.

Three more self-denying and devout prelates than Patrick, Beveridge, and Tenison, pioneers of the evangelical divines of the eighteenth century, could seldom be found living at one time. Yet they are eclipsed in this age by Dryden's "Good Parson" and Charles II.'s "little black fellow who refused Nelly a lodging"—the saintly Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells. If public opinion could beatify, Ken would take a high place among the Blessed, along with Bishop Wilson, Thomas More, John Kyrle (the Man of Ross), George Herbert, Charles Dickens, and Charles Lamb. As Macaulay admits, Ken's "character approaches as near as human infirmity permits to the ideal perfection of human virtue." He survives in literature in two almost inspired Lives, and in those two beautiful hymns of Morning and Evening, "Awake, my soul" and "Glory to Thee, my God, this night." The first owes something to Flatman's *Morning Hymn*. The most faithful witness of his age, Ken refused to take the oaths, and was deprived in 1691. He died at Longleat, March, 1711, *æt.* 74, and his tomb under the chancel window of the handsome church at Frome is still a place of pilgrimage. As the last spadeful of earth was cast upon his grave, it is recorded that the sun rose and the children present sang with their clear young voices, "Awake, my soul, and with the sun." The spirit of these good men is seen in the educational, religious, and philanthropic societies which sprang up and flourished so beneficently under good Queen Anne. The Societies for the Reformation of Manners, which aimed at correcting the licence of the times (so conspicuous, as already referred to, upon our comic stage), began to be formed in 1692, and in ten years' time were already enormously powerful. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was projected by Dr. Thomas Bray in 1699. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was floated by Bishops Tenison and Compton, Humphrey Prideaux, and Dr. Bray just two years later. Numerous parochial libraries and charity schools date from the same period, and exercised an unmistakable influence in extending and diffusing, and at the same time giving an excessive Puritan tinge to English Letters (see Josiah Woodward's *Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies; Life and Designs of Dr. Bray, 1746*; Nelson's *Life of Bull, 1713*; Secretan's *Life of Nelson*; Overton's *Life in the English Church, 1660-1714*; *Quarterly Review*, No. 313; Dr. Stoughton's *Church of the Restoration, 1874*; Kempe's *Classic Preachers of the English Church, 1877*; Tulloch's *English Puritanism, 1861*).

It is probable that the greatest spiritual energy of the age emanated neither from conformists nor dissenters of the old orders (Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists), but from the extraordinary mystics who became known as Quakers, and whose proper place in the scheme of the universe (were they mad fanatics or the salt of the earth?) it is still so difficult to define (*cf.* Macaulay and Carlyle). Discontent with the shams of a State

Church, whether Presbyterian, Episcopal, Baptist, or Independent, may have well contributed to the rise of these mystical and mysterious psychopaths. But, as with other mystics (the family likeness is notable), the conviction of illumination from within and direct guidance from the unseen world is their predominant feature. They have religion (conventional as far as it goes, but not very clearly emphasised or defined) in a most acute form; their belief is fixed on auto-inspiration, not in dogma or learning. George Fox (1624—1691) set the example of going about from steeple-house to steeple-house asking the priest or minister by what commission he taught and how he dared to take money for propagating error. The man in the leather breeches, who kept his hat on before magistrates and was undeterred from pursuing this course by any known discipline of stocks or stones, became a source of panic to professional pulpiteers, who fled incontinently at the very rumour of his approach. In an age of shams this cult of veracity, rooted in spiritual inwardness, and existing only in an atmosphere of antagonism, found a ready response. Fox himself had little of the spiritual genius of one or two of his fellows, such as James Nayler, Simpson, or Barclay. He was a more homely mystic, but his neuropathic absorption was sufficiently sublime, as evidenced by the story of his taking off his shoes and parading Lichfield, shouting as he went, "Woe to the bloody city of Lichfield." His *Journal*, edited by Thomas Ellwood in 1694—three years after Fox's death—remains a book of extraordinary interest, if only as a record of human will-power and originality, apart from its unconscious humour and its vivid sidelights upon the England of Bunyan and Bishop Burnet. Ellwood as a mystic was less *exalté*, but his own *History* of his life (first published in 1714, the year after his death) gives a most graphic picture of the period of the Quaker persecution, and of the unspeakable prisons in which "the seekers" of the seventeenth century were too often immured. William Penn, in his *Fruits of Solitude* of 1693 and its various sequels, was the Solomon (or the Sancho Panza) of the early Friends, with his constant relays of reflections and maxims. Robert Barclay (1648—1690) was the learned apologist of the movement. In his *Truth cleared of Calumnies*, his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity as the same is held forth and preached by the people, called in scorn, Quakers* (1678), and elsewhere he undertakes to demonstrate the possibility of the union of the soul with God—without sacraments, without councils, without bulls, without bishops, without priests, without tradition, without commentaries, without books—without intermediary of any kind whatsoever (see Fox's *Diary*,* ed. P. L. Parker; Ellwood's *History*,* ed. Crump, 1900; Combe's *Révélation Intérieure*, 1894; W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*).

The best edition of Burnet's *History* is that in course of publication by the Clarendon Press (Routh and Airy), with a supplement of Burnet's collected material and a commentary by Miss Foxcroft, the capable editor of the Marquis of Halifax. Charles Lamb writes to Manning, "I am reading Burnet's *Own Times*. Did you ever read that garrulous pleasant history? He tells his story like an old man past political service, bragging to his sons on winter evenings of the part he took in public transactions when his 'old cap was new.' Full of scandal, which all true history is." See also Prof. A. J. Grant's *English Historians*, 1906. The standard edition of Ludlow's *Memoirs* is that of Prof. Firth, also published at Oxford, with a valuable introduction. There is an excellent three-volume edition of the *Lives of the Norths* by Canon Jessopp, with portraits and full index (Bohn). *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* was re-edited by Prof. Firth in 1885; new editions of this book and of Reresby's *Memoirs and Travels* have recently appeared among the Dryden House Memoirs (published in Gerrard Street, close by the site of Dryden's old house). The *Memoirs* of Evelyn, containing the *Diary*, were first published by William Bray in 1818-19; re-edited by Upcott in 1827, and by Wheatley in 1879 & 1906. There are recent editions in the Newnes Library, both of the *Diary* (1903) and of the *Life of Mary Godolphin* (1904). Some of Evelyn's gardening books and his *Sylva*, or discourse on forest trees, and *Pomona*, on fruit trees, of 1664, have recently been resuscitated. His travels of 1641-46 in France and Italy, as related in the *Diary*, gain in interest as illustrating the contemporary rambles of John Milton and the imaginary John Inglesant, and as exhibiting the charm of foreign travel before quick trains and cheap tourist agencies had robbed it of the last vestiges of magic.

CHAPTER V

JOHN LOCKE AND THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

"The philosophy of Locke is still the system of the English, and all their new additions to morality are saturated with his spirit."—LYTTON, *England and the English*.

The *Essay on the Human Understanding*—The Star Chamber and the Press—Some early newspapers—Newspapers and style.

JOHN LOCKE, son of a country attorney, who joined the Parliamentary side in 1642, born at Wrington, Somerset, August 29th, 1632, was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford, where he became lecturer on Greek and rhetoric. Obtaining exemption, however, from taking orders, as his office prescribed, Locke devoted himself to the study of physics, and especially of medicine, with intent to becoming a doctor. After thirteen years' residence at Christ Church, in 1665, disgusted with the verbal subtleties of the Aristotelian philosophy, he went on a diplomatic mission to the Elector of Brandenburg (some interesting letters written by him from Germany on this occasion were published by Lord King in 1829). In 1666, though never having taken a degree in medicine, he practised as a kind of amateur assistant to Dr. David Thomas, and through his medical skill became an intimate friend of Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, who attached the young scholar to his household as tutor to his son. In the Earl's house Locke was brought into the society of the most distinguished wits of the day, notably the Duke of Buckingham and the Marquis of Halifax.

In 1672, through Shaftesbury's influence, Locke obtained the post of Secretary to the Board of Trade, which he only held for a year, his patrons falling out of favour.

In 1675 his health, about which he frequently consulted his friend Sydenham, being in a specially delicate state, Locke visited France, where he resided for four years—first at Montpelier, and afterwards at Paris, where he made the acquaintance of the most eminent French

literary men. He returned to England in 1679, and, Shaftesbury being again in power, he acted as his private adviser; but Shaftesbury falling for the second time, they both fled to the Low Countries, where Shaftesbury died in 1683, and Locke was deprived of his studentship at Christ Church by a special order from Charles II., and denounced as a dangerous heresiarch in philosophy. During this exile his first essays appeared in Le Clerc's *Bibliothèque Universelle*, which was to be for many years the chief European organ of men of letters. The Revolution of 1688 restored Locke to his native country, and he was made a Commissioner of Appeals with a salary of £200 a year. In 1695, having aided the Government with his advice on the subject of the reissue of the coinage, he was made a member of the new Council of Trade, which office the state of his health obliged him to resign in 1700, and he resided during the last four years of his life at Oates, in Essex, the seat of his friend Sir Francis Masham, where the infirmities of his declining years were soothed by Lady Masham, daughter of Dr. Cudworth. Locke died on October 28th, 1704, and was buried at High Laver, near Oates.

Locke was a homely thinker—the only kind of thinker likely profoundly to influence the typical Englishman of the eighteenth century. His foundations in metaphysics were broad and obvious, but they were *foundations*. He tried to bring his philosophy down to the level of cheerfulness and common sense, and the obligation of practising his own philosophy was one which he emphatically did not shirk. He was indeed one of those men like Benjamin Franklin

who, without possessing any soaring spirit, yet by their constant and systematic industry, zeal for work, and concentration upon the practically useful subjects of contemplation helped to raise the standard of living about him to an extent almost incredible in a single individual. His familiar works, all of them assuming the characteristic form of pamphlets addressed to the public with a view to clearing the way toward some immediate end, might be termed the Synthetic Philosophy of the eighteenth century. Unlike a later system, however, they influenced political thinkers in the same kind of way that Burke and Adam Smith began to influence them a century later, and all the English philosophers and most of the French ones (notably Berkeley, Hume, and Rousseau) used Locke's essay as the foundation of their own speculations.

Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* (1690, the result of twenty years' thought, for which he received £30) formed the cornerstone of his system. It is in brief a very straightforward plea for the free exercise of reason (for no province of our knowledge can be regarded as independent of reason), together with an analysis of ideas and of the language in which alone we can communicate them. He attempts to show that ideas are not innate, but are the outcome of reflection working upon the records of sensation. The reason is in consequence the one safe guide. Formulæ, doctrines, assumptions leading to acts and modes of life without ideas are the dangers from which reason is our refuge. Custom from which reason has departed is the stumbling-block of humanity.

In full harmony with the teaching of this famous essay is that of *A Letter concerning Toleration* (1689), in which he is at pains to demonstrate that Christianity (in which he was a firm believer) was essentially reasonable. Similarly in his *Treatise of Government* (1690) he shows that civil government is not the outcome of a contract such as Hobbes had described, but of a free contract, in which the guiding principle must be the intelligence between governors and governed; and completely of a piece with the rest of the system is *Thoughts concerning Education* (1693), in which in an admirably lucid form he develops the distinctively English tenets that wisdom and character rather than knowledge or erudition should be the proximate aims of the

teachers of youth. This pellucid and admirable rationality invaded every activity of his life. He loved order; he went about the most trifling things always with some good reasons, and he esteemed the employments of men in proportion to the good they were capable of producing. The sense of responsibility that he endeavoured to implant in every one of the obligation to prove a useful member of society became one of the root ideas in England, where the idea of *duty* acquired a significance elsewhere unknown.

We have seen in a previous chapter how printers were restricted in number by law; how it was in 1534 prohibited to import books which were printed abroad for the wholesale market in England; how functionaries were appointed to license books and patents granted which carried with them a monopoly of the printing of certain individual books such as the Bible, or classes of books such as law books or music books. The committee of the Privy Council, known as the Star Chamber, in 1637 increased the penalties of those who issued unlicensed books to whipping and the pillory. The Puritans, if possible, took an even stricter view of their responsibility in regard to the stamping out of objectionable books than the Cavaliers. Powers were granted by the Long Parliament to break open private houses in search for unlicensed printing presses. After the Restoration a strict system of licensing was adopted, and in 1662 it was sought to control the selling of books by enforcing a licence from some episcopal authority. This was not carried out; but in 1663 Roger l'Estrange, a Tory stout and bitter, was appointed sole licenser of all political and periodical literature—a post which he retained with small interruption down to the Revolution of 1688. L'Estrange himself organised two small papers, *The Intelligencer* (every Monday) and *The News* (every Thursday), which he designed to tell the people of London just as much news as it was expedient for them to know. Rivalry with these two privileged organs seemed quite out of the question; but by a curious accident—the sequestration of the court at Oxford during the Plague of 1665, and the need felt by the court for an independent paper, free from all possibility of infection—*The Oxford Gazette* came into existence. L'Estrange was furious at such a contravention of his pet monopoly and privilege; but the new venture was brought out by express command of the King, and

L'Estrange could do nothing to injure it. So helpless was he that at No. 24 (February 5th, 1666) *The Oxford Gazette* became *The London Gazette*, which after many vicissitudes is still with us, and commenced its career like that of an Oriental potentate by summarily destroying all its rivals.

The hampering restrictions upon the Press, with most of the laws and ideas upon which these were based, especially as to the unlawfulness of publishing rumours, came to an end in 1695. The Star Chamber had opposed a free Press on the same ground that the Catholics had opposed a free Bible. Opinions were dangerous things, and authority in such matters must be placed above reason. Now, owing largely to the spirit with which Locke had permeated the politics of the Whigs from Shaftesbury's time onwards, a silent revolution of the very greatest moment in the history of opinion and of literature as the organ of opinion was effected.

On May 3rd, 1695, the law which had subjected the Press to a censorship expired. "A great experiment was making. A great revolution was in progress. Newspapers had made their appearance." It was not, of course, a first appearance, as the vivacious expression of Macaulay might almost lead one to suppose. Gazettas (so called after a small coin) originated in North Italy during our Elizabethan period, and in 1622 Nathaniel Butter had brought out in London a regular numbered journal called *The Weekly News*, hardly distinguishable in its appearance or contents from the popular broadsheets and pamphlets containing intelligence of robberies, executions, or foreign events which had already been common enough. It is true enough, however, that the seventeenth-century "Gazettes," "Diurnals," "Mercuries," and "Observators," though their importunity was severely mocked by the dramatists (especially Ben Jonson in *Staple of News* and Fletcher in *Fair Maid of the Inn*), had been of very little account. Until 1695 the Press had been effectually muzzled. A new era started for journalism with *The Daily Courant* of 1702, printed on one side only as it was, "to spare the public at least half the impertinences of ordinary journalism."

During the eighteenth century, what with the stringent laws of privilege and libel and crushing taxation dating from the stamp duty of 1712 (the "fall of the leaf"), the Press was still

subjected to extraordinary disabilities and forfeits. Nevertheless, very few years elapsed before something like a journalistic *flair* was manifested by men like Roper and Boyer; much higher qualities were exhibited by exponents such as Addison, Swift, and that born journalist Daniel Defoe. Later in the century commercial, industrial, financial, and managerial capacities of the very highest order were devoted to the Press by such men as Walter, Perry, and Daniel Stuart. Changing its uniform perpetually, represented now by a flight of "Postmen," "Postboys," "Flying Posts," and "Daily Posts," now by *The Review*, *The Examiner*, *The Tatler*, and *Spectator*, a little later by a crop of "Journals"—Defoe's, *Mist's*, the Grub Street and the Covent Garden, famous for its connection with Henry Fielding—the Press has all along maintained a steady upward course of almost continuous and uninterrupted progress. Johnson and Smollett, associated as they are with *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Rambler*, *The Idler*, *The Craftsman*, *The Critical*, *The Monthly*, *The Briton* (with its more famous antidote *The North Briton*), were two of the chief pillars of journalism in mid-eighteenth century. Then came the era of *The Public Advertiser* and *The Public Ledger*, followed by *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Morning Herald*, *The Morning Advertiser*, and *The Morning Post*—serving to show that at each succeeding epoch in journalism there is one predominant catchword.

The Sun and *The Star* were in those days both highly reputable papers; but when the century closed the three foremost competitors for popular favour were *The Morning Chronicle* (Whig), *The Courier* (Ministerialist), and *The Times*. With the aid of a somewhat motley bodyguard of rebels and insurgents—Defoe, Smollett, Wilkes, Woodfall, Junius, Horne Tooke, Shelley, Cobbett, the Hunts, the Hones, and the Hetheringtons—the British Press through all these changes and chances made its way gradually and slowly but surely to a position of complete emancipation from Governmental control; while its relief from pillage was achieved in successive instalments by the substantial reduction of the Stamp Duty in 1836 and its total abolition in 1855. The abrogation of the Paper Duties about six years later removed the last of the so-called taxes upon knowledge.

Despite the depths of degradation to which

it had been reduced by Sir Robert Walpole, who manipulated it systematically—now bribing heavily with secret service money, now thumb-screwing with fine and imprisonment—the Press had all this time been gaining in reputation,

and more and more impressively assuming the rôle of the great liberator and emancipator. Originally little more than a town crier, it was preparing with more and more plausibility to assume the robes of the prophet.

THE mechanical improvements effected towards the close of the eighteenth century increased the constituency of the Press from thousands to millions, and what had hitherto been a vast potentiality became almost at once (it was first seen clearly in the United States of North America) an immense power. When the transformation was accomplished, it was seen that the effects of this power were very different from what had been anticipated. They were also much more comprehensive; the transformation affecting society at war¹ quite as much as society at peace, and profoundly influencing not only trade, politics, and the traffic of everyday life and conversation, but also religion, justice, science, art, amusements, the drama, and, by no means least, literature. Because the newspapers had freed debates and helped to discredit the gross tyranny and jobbery of the parliamentary majority under George III. and his wirepullers, it was thought that the Press would become a prime agent of political freedom; because it had been in general strongly opposed to religious intolerance, it was thought that it would stimulate to a high degree independent and individual opinion; because it was the work to a large extent of men from the lower middle class who showed themselves to possess brains, it was thought that it might become an advocate of (that heterodox and anti-British conception) a fraternity of wit. But in all these matters expectation has been pretty completely falsified. Instead of emancipating, the Press (as most would agree) has done much to enslave individual opinion, while as to public opinion it stage-manages that to suit what must be regarded as primarily the interest of the capitalist class; it arranges the political limelight in such a way as to foster the popular delusion that the two great parties in the State are bruising each other for the popular benefit; it inflates the importance of those debates, which are more often than not but a feeble echo of its own; it stultifies diplomacy by its indiscretions; aggravates popular and national prejudices, and exaggerates village games into imperial shows. Exaggeration has, in fact, become to such an extent the normal tone of the Press as to expose it very seriously to the charge of "vulgarising the national mind." The grave and censorious airs of its didactic youth have been pretty generally dropped, and the Press has acted in all these ways as an intensifier of popular tendencies and failings. Liberation writ large is promised in general terms as the ultimate objective of Press activity, but in the pursuit its forces are very soon reduced to become the passive instruments of every kind of subsidiary agitation. The "papers" work hard, it must be confessed, to condone the two besetting sins of English society in the twentieth century—the two ugly vices, avarice and cowardice. With such nicety does it register the form and pressure of an age of frivolity that the public is in chronic danger of a surfeit—even of football and *faits divers*, both excellent things in their way; book-chat has become a burden, while the pettinesses of philanthropic peeresses, song and dance comedienues, successful jockeys, and the reigning buffoons of bench and pulpit are degraded to the anecdotal value of "ten-a-penny." By such proceedings four-fifths of the Press at least incurs grave peril of becoming what the foreign and American Press has already become—not so much a watchword as a byword—a laughing-stock!

The venal Press of Walpole's time has risen superior both to blackmailing and to bribery—no Press could be freer from anything approaching to corruption in this respect than ours. Yet all this time it cannot be concealed that in the long run its commendation is virtually assured for every enterprise, whether it be a theatre, a book, a church, a charity, or a business concern, subject to the one necessary condition that capital be extensively invested in it. It becomes in the ultimate analysis the champion of every strong vested interest. Automatically, without the intervention of any gross agency such as bribery, our Press strengthens in every way the hands of the upper class, who in England direct everything, absorb everything, pay for everything, disguise everything. Like the "Reformed Parliament" and the "New Police," the free and independent Press has become a bulwark of the system by which all power is concentrated in upper-class hands—the more effectually since, to all outward appearances, borough-mongering and bribery are as extinct as the dodo and the avenues to every kind of distinction in England are absolutely free.

Of anything in the nature of intelligent guidance of the humbler classes, the labouring poor, the exploited, the down-trodden, and the impenetrably stupid, the English Press has no idea. When it has supplied the mob with the latest cricket, the latest football, the latest police news, and the latest racing, it thinks it has done as much as can be expected. It is not a philanthropic concern, of course, the Press. Primarily, each newspaper is a perfectly independent going business concern, representing ordinarily a large amount of capital, the value of which is estimated by the extent of the paper's popularity. Nevertheless, having regard to the large part

¹ "Most modern wars may be ultimately traced to national antipathies which have been largely created by newspaper invectives and by the gross partiality of newspaper representations. As the writers have no part in the dangers, while by the increased circulation of their papers, they reap a large harvest from the excitement of war, they have a direct interest in producing it. Wherever there is some vicious spot, some old class hatred, some lingering provincial antipathy, a newspaper will arise to represent and to inflame it" (Lecky, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, chap. xi.).

which the imagination must play in the healthy activity of the mind, and to the need that there is in the imagination for altruistic and patriotic stimulus, one cannot but regard the neglect of the altruistic emotions by the modern newspaper Press as a source of considerable danger to the commonwealth.

With all its defects, the British Press has rendered great services to this same commonweal, and it is a common opinion among unprejudiced persons that the benefits due to it have outweighed the abuses to which it has shown itself liable. When, however, we confine ourselves to the direct influence which the Press has produced upon English literature, with which we are more nearly concerned, this common opinion is no longer tenable. It can hardly be denied that the effect of the newspaper Press upon our literature has been preponderantly bad.

In the first place it tends to make the literature of the passing moment even more ephemeral than it ordinarily would be. It is the Press that consecrates such phrases as "the book of the week," "the book of the season," and that enshrines in the place of literature the credentials of celebrities and the memoirs of "men (and women) of the time." Every one knows what is implied by "a newspaper general," "a newspaper statesman," "a newspaper lawyer," or "a newspaper divine." To the modern journalist, as to the modern actor, the part is greater than the whole. A pungent extract is more effective than a new point of view; a snapshot has more actuality than an artistic composition. By the praise of such qualities, which make good copy, the Press warns up numbers of ephemeral fragments into heterogeneous books. For a serious work, it instinctively feels and sometimes ingenuously admits its incapacity. We have a good instance of this in the treatment accorded by *The Athenæum* to Herbert Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*. Briefly speaking, the newspaper distracts the public, and by feeding it with *hors d'œuvres* and *relevés* unfits it for a more sustained course. Instead of being something new that is of value to the world at large, literature is degraded to a disproportionately increasing extent to subserve the distraction known as "reading," by acting as an anodyne to the monotony of the life of machine drivers—the monotony to which so many of the vices of our town dwellers are attributed, and to which so many of the evils of modern life are so incontrovertibly due. For a great portion of the nineteenth century it will be readily admitted that the Press (through the agency of such organs as the *Edinburgh* and *Saturday Reviews*) exercised a strong deterrent influence upon triflers and amateurs in letters. Its unsympathetic attitude won for it a reputation of ferocity, and it has now gone to the opposite extreme. It welcomes everything on condition that its vogue does not outlast a single season. Remarkable as the managerial capacity displayed by English journals has been—their enterprise in getting best news and best comments—the amount of space it has found for pure literature has hitherto been small. Latterly, however, it has followed continental example in admitting alike *contes*, *romans*, and literary papers. The free library, funereal in most of its effects upon literature, has hitherto combated the monopolising influence of the Press with some success. But the larger is evidently destined to swallow up the less, and the newspaper will eventually supersede the book altogether as far as the great mass of the population are concerned. The dream of popularising the first of the arts is already exploded, and the study of literature in its highest sense must inevitably become restricted more and more to the small elements in our Anglo-Saxon population in whom the power of artistic appreciation is actively developed.

In one respect the collective Press of the English-speaking world has been gravely maligned. The popular view that the purity of the English language is endangered by slovenly writing in the Press is diametrically opposed to the facts of the case. Slovenly writing is committed not to the columns of the Press (which are criticised with Argus eyes both before, by the pick of professional readers, and after publication by all and sundry) but to the pages of long-winded academic studies—to books by scientific experts who are not expert with the pen, and to the increasing multitude of books by amateur authors who happen to be notorieties. Cacophonies, tautologies, and solecisms of grammar have no effect whatever upon the reputation of these worthies. They would be simply fatal to that of a skilled workman upon the Press. The standard of workmanship and *esprit de corps* among members of this body is high, and when once a form of expression or a grammatical usage is recognised by a leading authority in the Press to be objectionable, it is stamped out quite mercilessly (one of the earliest precisians and reformers in this respect was that greatest of all our journalists, Jonathan Swift), and with a severity which makes small allowance for the catholicity of our older English literature in such matters. Far from degrading the English speech, the Press operates far more than any other agency to purify and to unify it.

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